

The New **INTERNATIONAL**

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The Great Land Robbery

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The Labor Movement In Tropical Africa—II

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European Socialism—I
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The Italian Movement**

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The Eisenhower Doctrine

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Winter 1957

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A Marxist Review

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Quarterly Notes:

The Eisenhower Doctrine

From the "greatest Secretary of State I have ever known," President Eisenhower obtained his latest "doctrine" for a solution of the Middle East crisis. No great departure in American foreign policy has emerged with this doctrine, since, like previous policies, it is an attempt to maintain the world leadership of the United States through essentially military predominance. Economic assistance promised to the Arab nations is subordinated to it. Actually, this new objective of containing Stalinist Russia is another variation of Dulles' diplomacy, or what the current *Progressive* aptly calls "dangling one foot over the brink of war." Under it the President may engage the nation in a military adventure if and when he feels that it is necessary, without discussion and without prior endorsement by Congress.

This doctrine, drawn to provide the means for engaging in war with Stalinist Russia, is, paradoxically, described as a great instrument of peace. "I don't think," said the Secretary, "anybody ever thought the Monroe Doctrine was a declaration of war. It was a declaration of peace, and that is what we are bringing here." But the essence of the Eisenhower Doctrine is more accurately presented in the description Dulles gave of it in his testimony before the Senate Committee. There he said:

We would want to limit our activity

to the minimum necessary to accomplish the objective, and if the objective could be accomplished by local action, certainly that would be all that would be undertaken. If it required action outside of the area, for example, to attack staging areas, lines of communication, and the like, then that would be done. I do not envisage the possibility that there would be, for example, an all-out attack on the Soviet Union unless it was quite apparent that what was happening was deliberately intended to be the beginning of the Third World War. In that event, we might have to act differently. Those are matters which inevitably have to be left to the judgment of the Commander-in-Chief.

Although we do not believe the danger of war to be as acute as it was several years ago (as a matter of fact, the danger of a new world conflict has receded considerably), the whole thinking of the Administration in the continuing world crisis revolves around "ultimate military solutions." In general, American foreign policy is fundamentally undemocratic. It is undemocratic in its world perspectives as they relate to the aspirations and yearnings of the people of the world; it is undemocratic in relation to the people of the United States, since it ignores the interests of the people.

At the end of the Second World War, the ferment throughout the continental land masses containing millions upon millions of colonial peoples began. It has continued unabated. The achievement of colonial inde-

pendence resolved only the first problems for the newly established nations. The problems of infinitely greater magnitude, those of economic and social reconstruction, the requirements of tremendous amounts of basic capital for growth—to these great problems, American foreign policy has been bankrupt and, above all, reactionary. The United States has not presented itself as the great spokesman of a new economic and political revolution in the colonial world, but rather as the heavy-handed defender of the old order, not the defender of the old colonial regimes, but the defender of feudal and private property rights where they conflict with the needs of the masses.

Among the Western allies, the United States appears as the provider of the goods of life, at a price: support of American position and policy in the world, regardless of the national bourgeois interests of these Allies.

It is a fact that American prestige in the world has never been lower. But it cannot be said that it wasn't rightfully earned. The colonial peoples do not regard the United States as the advocate of their economic, social and political freedom, and American foreign policy has never been calculated to overcome these feelings of the people; on the contrary, it has enforced them. Where American policy has not been outwardly or directly motivated against the best interests of the new Asian states, it has been highly ambiguous. So reactionary or so ambiguous, that Supreme Court Justice Douglas, for example, has publicly deplored the whole substance of the visionless foreign policy of the nation.

THE TWO MOST significant world events in recent times are the crisis in world Stalinism epitomized by the revolt in the satellite countries of Po-

land and Hungary, and the crisis in the Middle East. In both events, the policies of the State Department have been irresolute, fitful, and ambiguous. Improvization and expediency have characterized the Administration's responses to these stupendous occurrences. However "daring" the declarations of Dulles may have sounded, in every instance they were reduced to glib moralizing and sanctimony, to which the Secretary is ever prone. As the Hungarian events have shown, bombast is a poor substitute for policy.

It might be asked: what could the United States have done in the face of the Hungarian events? Send troops into the country and risk the danger of a new world war? Obviously not. But American propaganda prior to the outbreak of the revolt was misleading to the people who eventually did the fighting. Propaganda broadcasts called for a revolt against the tyranny of Stalinism; the people were led to believe by indirection and implication that they would be aided in their struggle by the "democratic West." Short of an over-all revolutionary world policy based upon the people of all countries, the aid which the country could have given to the Hungarian revolutionaries was indeed limited. But even this limited aid was not forthcoming. Moreover, as if to emphasize its bankruptcy, American treatment of the Hungarian refugee problem was once again reactionary. No bold, forthright and honest solution of the refugee problem has been, or will be, achieved. At home, the refugee problem is in the hands of our native Neanderthals, so that the tiny, resourceless country of Austria is left with the major share of the problem. Is it any wonder that anti-American feeling among the Hungarian refugees in Europe runs high? The refu-

gees feel deceived. They feel that they were promised goods that were never delivered. The American attitude toward the Hungarian revolt on the one hand hailed the heroic struggle against the Russian colossus, and on the other, worried and wondered about the implications of the revolution as method, and the Workers Councils as instrument, of the rebellion.

In the Middle East, American foreign policy has one dominating motive force: oil. For the sake of oil the government has bribed half a continent. On behalf of oil, it has clashed with its Allies, condoned slavery, and embarked on a high policy of what amounts to financial bribery of the most miserable rulers in the world, the Arab chiefs of state. For the friendship of King Saud, the United States refused to subscribe to the anti-slavery covenant of the United Nations. For the purpose of dominating the area, it refused to join the Baghdad pact which it helped to initiate. It has denounced Israel and given support to Nasser's regime in Egypt at a time when it appeared that the dictator was on his way out. It has turned its back on its chief NATO Allies, Great Britain and France, who joined the Israel invasion of the Sinai Peninsula, with their own ill-conceived and ill-fated, imperialist venture at Suez.

Then, in great haste the Administration has sought to repair this debacle by the elaboration of the Eisenhower Doctrine, in which it reassured these same Allies and sounded a warning to the Arabs about the implications of Russian aid to the area. The Eisenhower Doctrine, however, was ill received by the Arab Nations. They rejected the Eisenhower-Dulles thesis of the Middle Eastern vacuum; they are hostile to the suggestion that

their area of the world become the next battleground in the struggle of the powers. In almost all the Arab countries, the reaction to the doctrine has been vigorous enough to cause the State Department to put all its resources behind reassurances to the Arabs. One of the Department's minor (or is it major?) efforts in this direction was the invitation to Saud to come to the United States to arrange for his next handout so that he might purchase more concubines, slaves, automobiles, and keep his armed and hired assassins loyal to him. Creating a schism in Arab ranks is no doubt also an objective inherent in the visit.

In all of this, the Administration has by-passed the UN. This omission has been so gross that Dulles and his Chief had to explain that really, nothing will actually be done without the UN, or that, in the end whatever commitments the United States makes in that area of the world, are in total conformity with the UN Charter! We are, in effect, says Dulles, carrying out the mandate of the UN in our Middle Eastern policy.

The endorsement of the Dulles-Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East may well give the Administration the assurance that the whole of Congress stands behind it in the "non-party" or "above-party" field of foreign affairs. It does not follow that this is true, even though overwhelmingly voted for. Congressional support was obtained for Administration policy, as it has been many times before, on the theory of crisis, an imminent threat to national sovereignty and the need for national unity. But what happens in the Congressional halls solves none of the problems in the Middle East, and certainly the "Doctrine" has solved nothing. It has merely expressed the Administration's

approach to the problems.

The paradox of this regime, if it is a paradox, is its reputation as a "peace" Administration. Up to now, it is true that war has not occurred and the danger of its outbreak is not imminent. The reasons for this lie in the concurrence of a number of large international events, not the least of which is the crisis of Stalinism. The mode of thinking of the Administration is, however, military. The economic aid program worked out by "The Team" is essentially subordinated to military exigencies. This is true for every part of the world, whether it be Europe, Asia or the Middle East. There is no such thing as "pure" economic aid as a part of American foreign policy, aid given on the premises of broad social programs of economic and political freedom. This business administration is utterly incapable of embarking on such a course, and therein lies its inability to neutralize or defeat Stalinism.

Stalinist Russia and world Stalinism have received terrible blows in recent years. That they have been considerably weakened by the contradictions of Stalinist expansion, and conflicts within the Stalinist orbit are now recognized by everyone. Yet the bourgeois world, under the tolerated leadership of the United States acts without vision.

Though the world was horrified at the cruel suppression of the Hungarian revolt by Stalinist Russia, the Kremlin yet makes progress in the trouble-spots. The lingering imperialism of the Western powers still manages to neutralize the abhorrence of Stalinism in areas of the colonial world. In other areas, it makes possible the advance of Stalinist imperialism. Already strained to the utmost by the demands made upon her by the satellite Stalinist states, Russia still finds

it possible to intervene everywhere and most particularly at this moment in the Middle East.

The policies of Great Britain, France and Israel have made the Russian penetration of that area much simpler. Like a parasite, Russian totalitarianism thrives on the activities of Western imperialism, and appears as the champion of Arab independence, ready to assist these nations in their struggle for freedom, apparently without asking for any kind of quid pro quo. Its "disinterest" arises from the fact that the oil of the area is already in the hands of the West. With the expulsion of the West, Stalinist Russia could try to subject the Middle East to an exploitation it has not yet experienced. As an anti-capitalist nation, characterized by a new form of exploitation and oppression, Russia can and does appear as an advocate of freedom only because the capitalist West is incapable of shedding its economic imperialist interests in the Middle East.

The Middle East is thus the pawn in the great power struggle. The policies of Russia and the United States and their respective allies must and do overlook and override the basic interests of the cruelly exploited Arab masses and threatens these people with war. In this situation, the Arab rulers sit like tradesmen searching for the highest price in the market, for like the great powers, the needs and interests of their people are non-existent.

A. G.

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Israel's Arab Minority:

The Great Land Robbery

But the discussion of Zionism is beset with the additional difficulty that clear and honest thinking is subtly hindered by the fact that really honest speaking is almost unattainable. An exceptionally long history of struggle and suffering has left many sore and sensitive spots in the body of Israel, and the thoughtful Gentile feels the necessity of excessive caution lest he touch any of these tender spots; while the Jew, no matter how emancipated, cannot completely overcome the effects of a traditional attitude which puts group loyalty above devotion to the simple truth, and regards it as the most deadly sin to tell the truth in the hearing of the hereditary enemy. Self-respecting Jews also cannot help leaning backward in expressions which may endanger their being identified with those who for their belly's sake creep out of the Jewish fold. The discussion of Zionism has thus been largely left to those who are more zealous about the triumph of their righteous cause than scrupulous about the justice of their arguments.

MORRIS RAPHAEL COHEN

As a result of the mass flight of the Palestinian Arab population during the 1948 war, there were only about 170,000 Arabs left within the expanded borders of Israel's territory after the armistices, as compared with 700,000 Arabs in this area before the start of the war.

This was a tremendous reduction from the proportions envisioned in the Partition Plan adopted by the UN in 1947. In the smaller Israel marked out by the partition, about 45 per cent would have been Arab (not even counting in the Bedouin); though it was expected that Jewish immigration would soon change the figure.

So Israel virtually began with an Arab minority of only 10 to 11 per cent, about the same as the Negro minority in the United States.

Today, according to government figures, the whole non-Jewish population is about 192,000, out of a total population of about 1,720,000. If we eliminate the 17,500 Druzes from this non-Jewish figure, then of the remaining 174,000 Arabs there are 131,500 Moslems and 42,800 Christians.

NOTE

The background of this article is given by a previous one, "Israel's Arab Minority: The Beginning of a Tragedy" (NI, Summer 1956), dealing with the 1948 Palestine war.

As before, it is the aim to document all important statements from sources which Zionists would recognize as being pro-Jewish rather than pro-Arab. Exceptions to this are clearly labeled in the text or reference notes, wherever necessary.

More than before, the present article refers most often to a basic work which is unfortunately still unpublished, though it has no near rival as the authoritative and scholarly work on the subjects covered. This is the Ph.D. thesis (Columbia, 1954) by Don Peretz, "Israel and the Arab Refugees," in two mimeographed volumes.

Since we lean so heavily on it, and on the same author's magazine articles, an introduction is in order. In viewpoint Dr. Peretz is a disciple of, and dedicates his book to, Judah L. Magnes, founder of the Ichud, a small group in Israel which is the only wing of the Zionist movement which still consistently stands for justice to the Arab people.

Peretz studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem till 1948; during the Palestine war, he was a correspondent for NBC; in 1949 he returned to Palestine as Quaker representative with the UN agency in the field; later he was Middle East media evaluator for the Voice of America. In 1952 he studied Israel and the Middle East on a Ford Foundation grant, leading to his thesis. More recently he has been an expert on Middle East affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

Thanks are also due to Mr. David I. Marmor, director of research of the Israel Office of Information (N. Y.), for his cooperation in checking matters of fact and expressing his differences in matters of opinion and interpretation.

The Tel-Aviv newspaper *Haaretz* which is mentioned several times is the leading daily in Israel, sometimes called the "Times" of Israel, liberal in viewpoint. Its record of relative frankness on the Arab question is very exceptional.—H. D.

The proportion of Christians among the Arabs, as against Moslems, is now over twice as high as it was before the war—20 to 25 per cent as against the pre-war 10 per cent. This means an added barrier against the automatic identification of the Arab minority with most foreign Arab regimes.

The largest Arab concentration, the all-Arab town of Nazareth, is predominantly Christian. It has over 20,000 Arabs, as against the remnant

of 7000 in Haifa and 5500 in Jaffa. All together, 51,000 Arabs live in towns (according to government figures) as against about 70 per cent who live in the 102 Arab villages.

A basic fact to keep in mind, too often obscured in both Zionist and Arab propaganda, is that this Arab minority as it presently exists consists largely of those Arabs who succeeded in resisting all of the considerable pressures to take part in the wartime flight, both from the foreign Arab aggressors and their irregulars and from the Zionist forces. They withstood a great deal and did not become refugees.

Even if one accepts the standard Zionist tale that the Palestinian refugees fled the country out of support to the foreign Arab invaders, still surely those people who did *not* become refugees thereby proved doubly and trebly that they were far from being "fifth-columnists." While the Zionist agencies seized the opportunity afforded by the flight to despoil the displaced Arabs of their land and property, surely there could be no question of dispossessing *these* Arabs who had not fled over the borders? . . .

There was question indeed. While much of the story of the land-grab concerns the refugees, who are now outside Israel's borders, we shall be presently concerned with the treatment of the Arab minority who remained inside.

In our preceding article on the Arab flight, we referred to the unofficial looting, property-snatching and land-grabbing which went on in the course of the fighting, directed against Palestinian Arab civilians. This, to be sure, was the start of the land-grab but it was still unofficial in the sense of being unsanctioned by explicit law and official government action, however deliberately it was

carried through by official Zionist bodies like the Jewish Agency, or furthered by the military commanders. This was bad enough, but the story that has to be told now is of a different order: the robbery of a people carried through in planned, deliberate, "legal" action by the formal action of the Israel government over a period of years, and not in the heat or turmoil of war.

THE EXTENT OF THIS ROBBERY, in terms of its economic importance to Israel, has already been partially sketched:* over a third of Israel's Jewish population lives on property stolen from displaced Arabs; most Arab-owned citrus groves were taken, plus almost all of the olive groves; etc. Let us now fill out this picture, keeping in mind that the entire area of Israel is not much over five million acres, or 23 million dunams in the Palestinian measure, of which less than a quarter are under cultivation. (A dunam equals one-fourth of an acre for rough estimate.)

Just before the war, the total amount of Jewish-owned land in all of Palestine was only 1,850,000 dunams. The total amount of *cultivable* land taken from the Arabs after that was 4,574,000 dunams, or nearly 2½ times as much¹—a fifth of the total area of the country. As for the total land taken—

The CCP [UN's Conciliation Commission for Palestine] estimated that although only a little more than a quarter was considered cultivable, more than 80 per cent of Israel's total area . . . represented land abandoned by the Arab refugees.² . . . [The 80% figure includes areas, such as Bedouin lands in the Negev, that had been held by Arabs traditionally with virtually all rights except juridical ownership, which was retained by the British colonial government.—H. D.]

*NI, Summer 1956, p. 88.

Furthermore:

... They left whole cities like Jaffa, Acre, Lydda, Ramleh, Baysan, Migdal-Gad; 388 towns and villages; and large parts of 94 other cities and towns, containing nearly a quarter of all the buildings in Israel. Ten thousand shops, businesses and stores were left in Jewish hands...³

Twenty thousand dunams of absentee property were leased by the Custodian [Israel government official in charge] in 1952 for industrial purposes. A third of Israel's stone production was supplied by 52 Arab quarries under his jurisdiction...⁴

The Custodian was also responsible for four million Palestine pounds in Arab bank accounts blocked in Israel,* and an undetermined amount of shares in businesses, corporations, companies and partnerships. In 1953 his office was one of the largest employers in Israel, and perhaps the largest single employer of new immigrants.⁵

According to the CCP (UN) estimate, the total value of the lands taken from the Arabs was over 100 million Palestine pounds, to which should be added another 20 million pounds for movable property appropriated.⁶ (In 1950, this total of 120 million Palestine pounds was worth \$336 million.) Arab estimates went up to 10 or 20 times this amount. The Israel government has refused to give its own estimate.†

*The money in these blocked bank accounts was one of the few items of Arab property largely released later—four-fifths by the October 1956 report of the UN's CCP. Of course, this benefited mainly better-off Arabs, not the fellahin. The problem involved only 6050 Arab refugee accounts.

†In general the Israel government has cloaked many details of the land-grab in secrecy. Dr. Peretz writes:

"Much information concerning the use, amounts, and distribution of abandoned Arab property and the government's policy toward it was secret. Records and most reports of the Custodian of Absentee Property were secret. ... Even the United Nations, in spite of frequent requests, was unable to obtain adequate information about Israel's disposition of Arab property."—Peretz (ref. n. 1), vol. II, p. 230.

Israel consistently refused to participate in UN attempts to set up mixed commissions "to administer conservation of existing properties including orange groves; to determine property ownership; and to evaluate property dam-

Of course the above inventory applies to all the displaced Arabs, most of whom are now refugees and not in the country. But how much was stolen from Arabs who are still in the country and who did not flee?

The leading Israeli daily *Haaretz* wrote in a survey of the Arab minority problem:

Individual DPs may be found in virtually every Arab village in Israel. 15,000 is the estimated number of fellahin [peasants] who have been dislodged from their homes and farms and left utterly destitute. About 15,000 more have been only partially hurt, some more and some less. The area of land seized under the Land Acquisition Law from the Arabs who did not flee from Israel—not counting those who did flee, from whom much more was taken away—amounts to over a million dunams, at least one half of which represents fertile and easily cultivable level country, the balance being stony mountainous terrain capable of cultivation only with the fellah's primitive plow.⁷

On the basis of a different estimate,‡ Dr. Don Peretz writes that

Approximately 40 per cent of the land owned by legal Arab residents of Israel

ages, including those to orange groves." The Arab states accepted these proposals. (Ibid., p. 262.)

The Israel agency in charge, the Custodian of Absentee Property, wasn't telling anybody: "The decision [of the government in 1953 to sell Custodian-held urban property] caused great concern to the Israeli Arabs who feared that their absentee property would also be sold. At a meeting in Nazareth called to clarify the situation, absentee Arab citizens were told to send their questions in writing to the Custodian's office for study. A year later they had still received no reply." (Ibid., p. 303.)

In the 1950 Knesset debate on a new land-grab law, when opposition parties made angry charges that the government was favoring the ruling Mapai party in distributing the acquired land, "One General Zionist member attacked the Custodian's office as 'a secret organization' which operated free of parliamentary control." (Ibid., p. 285.)

The UN agency (Conciliation Commission for Palestine) therefore had to work out its own estimates with considerable effort; Peretz's book explains at great length the bases and methods it used in arriving at its conclusions, which he gives.

‡Of the 4 million-plus dunams taken from Arabs, "approximately 300,000 dunams belonged to Arab residents of Israel who had fled from one section of the state to another during the fighting, or had been moved from their villages by the Jewish authorities for 'security reasons.'" (Peretz in *Middle East Journal*, ref. n. 32.) And in his book (ref. n. 1) Peretz also mentions 30,000 such Arabs, adding, "as well as much of their urban property."

was confiscated by the authorities as part of their absentee-property policy.⁸

Forty per cent of the land owned by presently *legal Arab residents* of the country, not even counting the other Palestinian Arabs who were driven out, or helped out, or kept out of the country by the Israeli refugee policy!

Let us now see how all this was done, from 1948 to the present.

1

The day we lick the Arabs, that is the day, I think, when we shall be sowing the seed of an eternal hatred of such dimensions that Jews will not be able to live in that part of the world for centuries to come.

JUDAH L. MAGNES, 1946

WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN how the land-grab and property-steal began in the course of the 1948 war itself under the initiative particularly of the Jewish Agency (an arm of the World Zionist Organization executive) and of the military commanders on the spot, who of course were formally the agencies of the new Israel government, as well as of less official looters and pillagers; while "affairs in many areas degenerated without any restraint."*

Almost a month after the Deir Yassin massacre, when the Arab flight was reaching a flood, the Zionist daily *Palestine Post* (May 5) already announced that a "Custodian of Arab Property" had been appointed in the Jerusalem area, and that similar authorities had been set up in other sections. This Custodian, said the paper, was a Haganah officer, name a secret, appointed by the Jewish Agency. In view of the role being played by the army and the Jewish Agency itself with respect to the grab of Arab property, one may wonder whether the appointment of an officer as Custodian was meant to restrain the grab,

or merely to regulate and channelize it. (This, of course, was still over a week before the State of Israel and its government were formally set up by declaration on May 15.)

In the early days of the war, the *ad hoc* decisions of various field commanders substituted for a unified, preconceived plan of operation [regarding Arab property]....

...From April until the Custodian's appointment [in July], the army had primary responsibility for occupied Arab property. Because it conquered the property, the military considered itself the rightful owner. When the time came for the Custodian to take over from the army, military authorities often placed obstructions in his way. Sometimes for days and weeks, the army prevented the Custodian from entering cities to take charge of absentee property.⁹

(In studying the fate of the Arab minority in Israel we will often find that the military authorities, representing the most chauvinist elements in Zionism, bucked the government or its courts for a more reactionary policy, perhaps the most spectacular case being the razing of the Arab town of Iqrit in 1951. This pattern began early.)

Once the state came into existence and the provisional government took over, bits of emergency legislation were improvised to give a color of legal sanction to what was actually being done. The first was on June 24, an Abandoned Areas Ordinance which gave a most peculiar definition of an "abandoned area":

1. (a) "Abandoned area" means any area or place conquered by or surrendered to armed forces or deserted by all or part of its inhabitants, and which has been declared by order to be an abandoned area.¹⁰

This law was made retroactive to the creation of the state, and in it the government gave itself the power to

*NI, Summer 1956, p. 103-4.

make all regulations for the "abandoned areas."

The definition of "abandoned area" was deliberately made so wide-open that it applied to virtually any Arab village or town or section, whether it had been abandoned or not. Even where the population had really "abandoned" a village, they may have merely gone a few miles away to wait out the shooting before coming back; or only *some* of the inhabitants may have fled; and indeed nobody at all need have fled anywhere, according to the carefully expansive formulation of the definition.

The ordinance therefore did not have to use ethnic terms to pinpoint its objective as *Arab* property. Actually many a Jewish area became "abandoned" by this definition too, but this is purely academic in view of the fact that the sharp edge of the ordinance was intended to be wielded solely in one direction.

The government set up a "Custodian of Abandoned Property"—a change of label from the previously designated Custodian of *Arab* Property in order not to formalize the fact of ethnic robbery. The first Custodian was appointed on July 15.

Since he naturally was not going to work the land himself—

... therefore steps were taken to legalize its use by the Jewish agricultural settlements which had occupied much of it. The Ministry of Agriculture was given power to assign this land to cultivators whom it could designate for a period of up to one year.¹¹

It is clear, then, that the government did not aim its ordinance only against "bad" Arabs who had fled to the invaders, as the Zionist story goes. No such criterion is involved in this ordinance in any way.

THIS ORDINANCE was only the beginning.

Dr. Peretz relates:

Long-term policy in the latter half of 1948 was to present the Arabs with the fact that a large part of their property no longer existed and that areas for their resettlement in Israel would be determined by security and political factors. As yet there was no government plan for the use of refugee property, but due to security reasons, their immediate return was not permitted. . . .

By the end of the year, government policy concerning use of the property also began to assume long-term aspects. . . .¹²

In December 1948 the Ministry of Finance issued its first Absentee Property Regulations. A "Custodian of Absentee Property" replaced the Custodian of Abandoned Property. This had the effect of transferring the label from the land to the person affected, but the change in terminology didn't help much. Just as "abandoned" property had been defined to include land that was never abandoned, so "absentee" was defined to include Arabs who were not only present in Israel but who had never been absent. According to *Haaretz*, "there is even a special label devised for these people, 'present absentees.'" ¹³

The key definition of "absentee" in these regulations was: a Palestine citizen who had left his normal or habitual place of residence.¹⁴ There was no pretense at limiting it to Arabs who had fled over the border or even to the other side of the fighting lines. Dr. Peretz explains:

Every Arab in Palestine who had left his town or village after November 29, 1947 [date of UN partition decision] was liable to be classified as an absentee under the regulations. All Arabs who held property in the New City of Acre, regardless of the fact that they may never have traveled farther than the few meters to the Old City, were classified as

absentees. The 30,000 Arabs who fled from one place to another within Israel, but who never left the country, were also liable to have their property declared absentee. Any individual who may have gone to Beirut or Bethlehem for a one-day visit during the latter days of the Mandate was automatically an absentee.¹⁵

Naturally, this formula was so broad that it could also net Jews who might come under the extended definition of "absentee." This danger was mainly academic, since those who administered the regulations knew well enough against whom it was aimed. But there were safeguards just in case:

The Custodian could issue a certificate stating that anyone was not an absentee if "in his opinion" such a person left his residence from fear of Israel's enemies, or if the Custodian believed that he was capable of managing his properties efficiently, without giving aid to Israel's enemies.¹⁶

There is no case where the provisions of the various land-grab laws (this one, or any subsequent one) were ever enforced against a Jew, even though they may have applied, and even though the laws were never ethnically formulated so as to be applicable to Arabs only.

Here are some of the other remarkable provisions of these regulations:

(1) The Custodian "could take over all property which might be obtained *in the future* by an individual whom he certified to be absentee."¹⁷ (Italics added.)

(2) The Arab is guilty till he proves himself innocent:

The Custodian could take over most Arab property in Israel on the strength of his own judgment by certifying in writing that any person or body of persons, and that any property was absentee. The burden of proof that any property was not absentee fell upon its owner, but the Custodian could not be questioned

concerning the source of information on the grounds of which he had declared a person or property absentee.¹⁸

(3) The Custodian could expropriate business associates of "absentee" Arabs, even though the associates themselves were not absentee:

All businesses in which at least one-half of the number of persons, partners, shareholders, directors or managers were absentees, or in which absentees were dominant or controlled at least half of the capital, were turned over *in whole* to the Custodian. [Italics added.]¹⁹

(4) Even where the Custodian might decide to release "absentee" property to its rightful owner, the game was not finished:

The Custodian could require the owner to deliver other property in exchange for his released property... The Custodian could withhold the certificates to release property until he received a maintenance payment, not to exceed five per cent per annum of the property's value, to be determined by the price which could have been obtained had the property been sold in the market... In addition, the Custodian was entitled to receive payment for all expenses incurred in holding the property, together with interest at the rate of six per cent per annum from the date he took over.²⁰

(5) The Custodian could do no wrong:

Any person carrying out an order given by the Custodian was not held responsible if it was later proved that the property was not absentees'.²¹

When this legal atrocity was discussed in the Knesset, some of the truth about it was told by the Arab deputy Sayf al-Din al-Zabi, who represented a Mapai-affiliated "Arab" list.*

*That is, this Arab notable represented an "Arab party" created by the Mapai, which is the ruling Zionist party, to corral Arab votes. In general, these men are regarded as turncoats by most Arabs, and rightly so; but on Arab questions in the Knesset they usually make the record in speeches of complaint and in their vote. At any rate, it is evident, such men as Al-Zabi are not "anti-Israel demagogues" or "agitators" but quite the reverse: the very tamest specimens the Zionists can find. The only point that

He

challenged the seizure by the Custodian of property belonging to Arabs who were legal residents of Israel, who had participated in the first elections and who held government-issued identity cards. Many were absent from their residence for a few days only during the fighting which overtook their villages, but did not leave the country. Al-Zabi pointed out that many residents of Turan and Nazareth who were gone only a few hours also lost their property to the Custodian. The majority of the villagers of Maalul, Andor [Eindor], and Al-Mujidal who took refuge in Nazareth when fighting occurred near their homes were declared absentees although they never left Israel's territory. Half the Arab inhabitants of Kafr Elut remained in their village during the fighting. The other half took refuge in Nazareth, but all the villagers became absentees, and even those who remained in their homes were required to pay rent to the Custodian for the use of their own lands. In Acre and Shafa Amr many Arabs were not permitted to cultivate their lands which were used by surrounding Jewish collectives under the authority of the Custodian and the Ministry of Agriculture. Villagers of Baysan and Zippori were moved from their villages by the army long after the end of active hostilities, and their property was turned over to the Custodian. Arabs of Al-Qitna were also moved by the army to Al-Ghabsiya and those of Al-Halhala were moved to Akbara for "security reasons," and their property declared absentee.²²

So said Al-Zabi; and since he is Arab, perhaps convinced Zionists can persuade themselves that he must be exaggerating, in spite of the fact that he is the Mapai's own domesticated Arab.

But the provisions of these regulations speak eloquently enough of the aims which animated the men who thought them up.

THE FOLLOWING MONTH, January 1949, a new legal instrument came into be-

is relevant here is whether they tell the minimum truth in their speeches of complaint in the Knesset, while still remaining affiliated with the Mapai.

ing in the form of an amendment to the Cultivation of Wastelands emergency ordinance. This empowered the Ministry of Agriculture to grant longer leases to Jewish settlers who were working "absentee" lands. It was a step on the road to their complete alienation; for at this point, it should be remembered, the "absentee" Arabs still owned the land in theory; the Custodian was simply . . . taking care of it in their theoretical absence.

The ordinance enabled the government to begin settling absentee [Arab] villages with [Jewish] farmers who would work the surrounding land. Government organizations were formed to manage the property and to rent land to individual farmers or contracting companies. Settlers were given the opportunity to choose lands near their villages through the Jewish National Fund. . . .²³

This Cultivation of Wastelands ordinance was also the basis of a land-grab method which did not depend on the "absentee" gimmick, and therefore could be used against those Arab landholders who could not be fitted into the absentee category even with stretching. It

empowers the Minister of Agriculture to seize any plot of land lying waste, regardless of the reason—the land might even be located in an area not accessible without a special permit, which the Military Governor might refuse to issue—and hand it to anyone for "temporary" cultivation. The only condition was that the Minister send a prior notice to the owner warning him to resume the cultivation of his land—and the warning could be in the form of a written notice displayed in a conspicuous place on his land, which, as we have said, was not at all accessible to the owner—and the owner took no heed of the warning. Since the Arab landowners concerned "took no heed" of the warning and proceeded to "keep their lands waste," those lands were leased by the Minister for a nominal sum to Jewish settlements and contractors, who in many instances employed the landowners themselves in the cult-

ivation of those lands, in return for a portion of the crops. And for this purpose the Military Governor was not at all averse to granting them entry permits into the closed areas.²⁴

In other words, it utilized what Mordechai Stein has aptly called "a sort of double-play of two laws."²⁵ One, which permits the government to seize any land in Military Government areas "in the interests of the public safety" and declare it a "security zone," is based on the Emergency Regulations of 1945—i.e., of the British Mandate. The Israel government has taken over these hated laws, which were originally set up in good measure as a colonialist's means of repressing the Zionist underground, and are equally suited as the Zionists' means to despoil the Arab minority.

When this ordinance is applied to an area, and its Arab owners ejected, the second ordinance comes into play. Since the land is not being cultivated by its Arab owners any longer, it can be taken over by the state as "waste-land" and handed over to Jewish settlers who *will* cultivate it—i.e., who will be allowed to cultivate it.²⁶

The land-robbery based on this "double play" is also aimed against Israeli Arabs who never fled.* But, as explained at the end of this article, this phase of the land robbery will be detailed in a future study dealing with Israel's military rule over its Arab minority.

2

It used to be said in the liberal first quarter of our century that a country was judged by the manner in which it treated its Jews. It is, therefore, understandably natural that the converse proposition should be suggested, and the question asked: how does the Jewish State treat its Arabs? JON KIMCHE

*M. Stein, in the article quoted above (ref. n. 25), writing as a socialist anti-Zionist, says: "With the help of this legal double-play, dozens of Arab villages have been confiscated (Ghabsiye, Ikrit, Kfar Anan, Ferradie, Birim, Seffurie, Mejdol, Mansura, Berwe, Damun, Um-el-Faraj, etc.)."

By 1950, WITH THE RELATIVE stabilization that followed the victory in the 1948 war, the government felt that a firmer juridical basis for the land-grab was necessary, and so it had the Knesset pass a law to legalize what had been done. Up to this time, the land-grab had been carried through via the ordinances of the provisional government.

This was the Absentee Property Law of March 1950. Dr. Peretz sums it up:

Actually the Absentee Property Law defined no new procedure. It merely legalized the *de facto* situation which grew out of improvisation under wartime emergency conditions. . . .²⁷

But

Minor changes somewhat curtailed the Custodian's power and improved the status of absentees.²⁸

One change was to narrow somewhat the definition of an absentee:

The new definition made an absentee of any Palestinian who, at any time since the UN partition decision of November 1947, had "left his place of habitual residence . . . for a place in Palestine held . . . by forces which sought to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel or which fought against it after its establishment. . . ." So—

It did not include Arabs who remained in areas controlled by Jewish forces after November 29, 1947 [the partition decision], provided they had not left such areas after that date. . . . the number of Arabs who benefited from the change was not large.²⁹

Besides, a good deal of the land-grab had already proceeded according to the wide-open provisions of the preceding ordinances, and the Arabs did not automatically get their land back just because the new law did not apply to them. On the contrary; we

shall see that in 1953 the Knesset had to pass another law precisely to legalize (once more) the retention of land stolen from Arabs outside the framework of any law or ordinance.

Other changes introduced by the 1950 law were: the Custodian could take over a business only when *all* the members, partners, shareholders, etc. were absentees, rather than half; the Custodian was no longer exempt from answering a court about the source of his knowledge about the status of an absentee; his maintenance payment was reduced from 5 per cent to 4. In addition, notes Schechtman,³⁰ the new law "required the Custodian to pay debts owed by absentees whose property they controlled, and to obey court orders for attachments"—a change which did not do the absentees any good.

Such minor changes did little to affect either the status of absentee property, most of which was already distributed, or the status of its original owners. Presentation of absentee property cases in the courts by Arabs, however, was facilitated.³¹

Dr. Peretz, in an outstanding magazine article, described the effect of this law in terms similar to those we have seen above in connection with the December 1948 regulations. After noting its definition of absentee, he said:

Consequently, any Arab of Nazareth who might have visited the Old City of Jerusalem or Bethlehem on Christmas 1948 automatically became an "absentee" under the law. Nearly all the Arab refugees in Israel, as well as the 30,000 inhabitants of the Little Triangle which became part of the state under the armistice agreements with Jordan, were classified as "absentees." Many Israeli Arabs who, during the battle of Acre, fled from their homes in the new to the old city lost their property under the provisions of this law.

... All of the new city of Acre was turned over to recent [Jewish] immigrants despite the fact that many of its

Arab "absentee" home owners were living a few yards away...³²

The pro-Zionist journalist Hal Lehrman has also remarked that "It was further charged that Israel authorities tended to treat any Arab owner, *ipso facto*, as an absentee unless he obtained, on his own considerable time and at his own expense, a certificate to the contrary."³³

IN THE KNESSET at the time of its passage, a series of amendments (offered mainly by the Arab deputies) were turned down, even though many of them proposed only an elementary measure of fair dealing. Among these were amendments to protect the land of Arabs (1) who were legal citizens of Israel, with an identity card, and had *not* aided the enemy; (2) who had never fled the country; (3) who had been expelled from their villages when these were conquered by the Israeli troops; etc.³⁴ In defiance of conscience, these Arabs were specifically voted into the "absentee" category.

Another proposed amendment wanted to set up a special authority, instead of the Custodian's say-so, to decide on the property of those Arabs who were legally in Israel. As *Haaretz* put it on March 20 after the law was passed, "Elementary feelings of justice demand that an Arab who legally returns to Israel should not continue to be an absentee. . . . We are not at war with the Arabs who are established citizens of the state. . . . A law which automatically makes them absentee is insufferable. . . . This is a matter of conscience and political understanding."

But it was the insufferable that was passed; and it seemed that the state of Israel was indeed "at war with the Arabs who are established citizens of the state."

The popular columnist Courtney of the pro-government *Jerusalem Post* attacked the law as "perhaps the most serious factor creating embitterment among all Arabs."

He pointed out that in Galilee twenty villages had been deprived of their property by Jewish collectives, which "arrogated to themselves, through long-term leases granted by the Minister of Agriculture, lands of Arabs who were free of any guilt or wrongdoing." ³⁵

The Israeli Arab spokesman E. N. Koussa, writing in the *Ichud's* organ *Ner* (January 1951), pointed out there was even a member of the Knesset who enjoyed all the privileges of a deputy and yet, because he was an Arab, "is under a legal disability to control his properties. Such is the actual condition of Mr. Tufiq Tubi, the Arab Knesset member."

Incidentally, Tubi is a Communist Party deputy, but this is hardly relevant to the fact that there exists a peculiar Israeli institution of "absentee" deputies voting on the country's laws.

One aspect of the Absentee Property Law precipitated a fight among the Jewish deputies themselves. Opposition parties criticized the great power vested in the Custodian, who was appointed by the Mapai's minister of Finance. "Control of a quarter of Israel's wealth and most of its land was a plum they hesitated to let fall to Israel's largest party,"³⁶ though they had not hesitated to steal this plum from the Arabs. Opponents accused the Custodian of giving 90 per cent of absentee property to Mapai-controlled institutions, cooperatives, etc., at half of its market value, and of selling absentee property to a favored few.

As MENTIONED ABOVE, one advantage gained by the Arabs was that it was

easier to bring the government robbers to court, for an accounting. On this whole issue of the land-robbery the Israeli courts have often been a prominent bright spot as defenders of justice,* but their remedial power has been too limited to make any considerable difference in the outcome. Court cases, however, have been particularly useful as documentable illustrations of what was going on, though one must bear in mind how few Arabs could even think of going through the court procedures.

Thus Dr. Peretz cites the "claim of Tanus Ilyas al-Askar against the Custodian" as "typical of many cases which reached the courts and thousands that did not." Let us take a look at this "typical" case.

Askar was a legal resident of Haifa, with an Israeli identity card; he had in fact voted in the national elections. In January 1948 he had gone to a village near Israel's northern frontier but had returned to Haifa in March.

He then obtained permission from the Custodian to receive rent from his home in Haifa and to lease a shop. Shortly thereafter he was denounced as an absentee who had procured his contract under false pretenses. The Custodian certified that he was an absentee and ordered him to evacuate his shop.³⁷

Askar went to court in self-defense. The High Court found in his favor on the ground that he had in fact exercised *de jure* citizenship rights and that this "automatically exempted him from the Custodian's arbitrary authority."

The court expressed the opinion in this case that, in the light of the evi-

*For example, Oscar Kraines of NYU writes in his book that under the 1950 land law, "the Custodian of absentee owners' property was authorized to exempt Arabs who had left their residence for valid reasons. In a number of appeals, the Supreme Court, to its credit for judicial integrity and impartiality, upheld the Arabs and severely reprimanded the Custodian and his staff for arbitrary, capricious, and harsh action in excess of their authority." (Israel, the Emergence of a New Nation, 1954, p. 27.)

dence, Askar had been classified an absentee in order to force his removal from his shop. "It can be said," stated the court, "that the certificate [classifying him as absentee] was issued only to deprive the claimant of elementary rights and of legal assistance and defense, and in this respect the Custodian acted in an untoward manner."³⁸

Another case is summarized by Judd Teller, a professional Zionist journalist who was UN correspondent in New York for *Davar*, the Histadrut organ. This is from a 1951 article of his:

There is the case, still pending in the courts, of Abed il Al and his family, who live in Om il Faraj, a Galilee village, and whom the military authorities had ordered deported as infiltrates. Al, admitting that he had fled the village at the outset of Arab-Israeli hostilities, claims that he has lived there all his life, that it is ridiculous to brand him an infiltrate, that his troubles in fact started only after he had refused to agree to a proposal by the military that he exchange his rich land in Galilee for an inferior parcel in another part of the country, and that if he lost his case all other Arabs in that village soon would face a similar choice because a nearby kibbutz was determined to increase its own holdings by annexing Arab lands. In a somewhat similar case, the Israeli high court has upheld an Arab claim and nullified an evacuation order.³⁹

On the role of the courts in tempering the land-robbery law in some cases, the pro-Zionist journalist Hal Lehrman remarked:

Mistreated Arabs could appeal successfully to the Supreme Court for redress. But the very frequency of such appeals showed the extent of the abuses, and many Arab fellaheen lacked the sophistication, the funds or the daring to go over the head of the official controlling their areas. The Court itself found occasion severely to reprimand the Custodian's office for its unjust interpretation of the law.⁴⁰

Now in general, as we have noted,

the Absentee Property Law of 1950 only legalized the *de facto* robbery that had already gone on, though in some minor respects (which we have noted) the status of absentees was a bit improved. Outside of the issue of Arab rights, however, "The fundamental change introduced by the law was the Custodian's privilege to sell property."⁴¹

Up to this time, theoretically the Custodian was simply holding the land on behalf of its owners. The new provision in the law "was the first step toward legally implementing the new policy of absorbing Arab holdings through development,"⁴² that is, of permanently and juridically alienating the land from its Arab owners. A Development Authority was set up which had the right to buy absentee property from the Custodian. The Jewish National Fund was specifically authorized to purchase such land.

The Hebrew University professor Norman Bentwich states in his book *Israel*, published in 1952:

The [Jewish National] Fund has now become an indispensable adjunct of the State for both rural and urban development. It buys from the Custodian of Absentee Property, appointed by the State, the land and houses of the fugitive Arabs, and makes them available to the State Development Board for occupation, the purchase-price, in whole or part, being held as compensation for the former Arab owners. Till 1947 it has acquired 250,000 acres—1,000,000 dunams in the Palestine measure; by 1951 it had trebled that holding. The programme for the next five years is to acquire another 500,000 acres, and for that the Fund hopes to collect 250,000,000 dollars. [Italics added.]⁴³

It should be remembered that the purchase-price, which is referred to, was set by one Zionist official for sale to another Zionist official for the purpose of integrating the land into the Zionist scheme of development. The

"former" Arab owners had nothing to say about it, least of all about whether they wanted to sell in the first place. In addition, as Bentwich indicates, the Arab owner might be allocated only a "part" of the purchase-price which is thus set for his own land.

The expectations of which Bentwich wrote were indeed realized. On July 3, 1953 the *Jerusalem Post* reported that

The Government signed an agreement with the Jewish National Fund this week for the sale of two million dunams, mostly abandoned land, it was announced yesterday.

The agreement was concluded in accordance with Government decisions in 1949 and in 1951....

The land in question is in all sectors of the country and is mostly agricultural. About 400 new [Jewish] settlements have in the meantime been established on it by the Jewish Agency....

After the mass flight of the Arabs the Government took over the custody of their holdings. In order to normalize [sic] the land situation, abandoned land is being transferred to the Jewish National Fund in a series of land transactions.

The significance of the latest land transaction may be measured from the fact that the entire area of Israel is a little over 20 million dunams, of which only 5 million dunams are under cultivation.

Thus the deed was consummated.

A LITTLE EASE-UP on one point took place in 1951 under the pressure of the election campaign for the Knesset. After all, the Arabs had 10 per cent of the votes, and the Mapai-affiliated "Arab" parties had to have some reason for asking for these votes; the Communist Party was getting the support of up to a third of the Arab minority and the government parties were worried. It is remarkable that even under these circumstances the paltry concession that was made was only such as to point up the nature of the whole operation.

The amendment that was passed allowed Arabs who were legal residents to keep any property which they might obtain *in the future*; they were not to be robbed of any property which they did not *yet* possess. The change did not affect the steal that had already gone on and was still going on. Such was its magnanimity.

According to Dr. Peretz' account, even this great-hearted gesture was first initiated in the Knesset, late in 1950, by a Mapainik, David Ha-Cohen, who had to break party discipline in order to do so. But the following year, under the spotlight of the election campaign getting under way, the Knesset passed it.

Even Arabs who were not absentees were liable to be affected by the [Absentee Property] law without Ha-Cohen's amendment. If a non-absentee Arab citizen willed property to his wife or child or to another member of his family who returned to Israel [from refuge abroad] under the plan to reunite families, their inheritance would be insecure. The Custodian could immediately seize it under the present law.⁴⁴

That much was vouchsafed to justice. Other things were promised with an eye on the vote. The Custodian, and also Moshe Sharett, talked about loosening up on some of the stolen property. *Haaretz* commented (June 2, 1951):

Is it not strange that only now... measures are promised on behalf of the Arab minority? So far no steps have been taken. It seems hardly likely that the policy will change after the elections.

It was a safe prediction.

3

And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me,
that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto
thee.
1 Kings 21: 1-3

THE JURIDICAL COMPLETION of the land-robbery was, however, not quite accomplished yet. One loose end had to be gathered up. There were still tracts of land that had been taken away from Arab peasants, during the war or right after it, whose robbery could still not be justified under any law, in spite of the wide-open character of the measures already passed. Besides, the whole operation could scarcely be considered cleaned up till a show had been made of offering some compensation.*

The task was met handily by the Land Acquisition Law of March 1953. It did not bother with any niggling piecemeal pretexts for stealing land from Arabs. In one fell swoop it came out with a formula which automatically legalized any and all land-robberies that had already taken place.

The way this is done is surely a juridical curiosity. The heart of the law is in Paragraph 2: land "will become the property of the Development Authority . . . free of any encumbrance" if the minister in charge certifies "by signed document" that it fulfills the following three provisions:

(1) On April 1, 1952, was not in the possession of its owners;

(2) Was used or earmarked within the period from May 4, 1948 to April 1, 1952, for purposes of essential development, settlement, or security;

(3) Is still required for one of these purposes...⁴⁵

The crux is in point (1), which carefully applies the law to any land that "was not in the possession of its own-

ers" for any reason whatsoever—the important reason being, of course, the simple fact that the owner had been illegally kicked off.

The law is being wrongly interpreted by Israel's Arabs, wrote a Zionist journalist from Haifa to the London *Jewish Chronicle*. They are in "panic" because they think it means all Arab-owned land can be "confiscated at will." That is not so, he assures; the law's main aim "is to grant legal status to an already existing situation."⁴⁶ It seems he expects his readers to heave a sigh of relief.

Haaretz related, in its January 1955 issue:

Since the publication of the law in the Official Gazette, up to the end of 1954 the Government Printer had his hands full with the job of issuing official brochures crammed with announcements to the effect that "I, the Minister of Finance... acting under the powers granted me in the law... hereby affirm that the lands specified below are covered by the following conditions... and therefore I order that they be transferred to the ownership of the Development Agency." This short announcement would always be followed by long lists of Arab villages, numbers of land parcels and series of coordinates sufficient to construct an entire map of Israel. When the work was concluded about two months ago,* the Development Agency of the State of Israel found itself the richer by over a million dunams.⁴⁷

Before its passage by the Knesset, the 1953 law was strongly criticized as unjust by a number of liberal and socialist Jewish deputies and spokesmen, but when it came to a vote not a single vote was cast against it by any Jewish deputy. At a protest rally of liberal Jewish and Arab notables, it was stressed that—

...the reason why not a single Jewish member of parliament voted against the

*For the question of Israel's offers of compensation to Arab refugees outside the state, which is outside the purview of this study, see Dr. Peretz's work (ref. n. 1).

*The Israel government propaganda booklet *The Arabs in Israel* (p. 27) says, "The transfer of such land to the Development Authority was completed by March 1954...."

bill, although many members of the Mapai and Mapam parties strongly criticized it before it was adopted, is that a number of powerful kibbutzim (collective farms) belonging to both Mapai and Mapam parties benefited directly from the law by acquiring the land requisitioned from the Arabs. The Left-wing [Mapam] kibbutzim Hamishmar and Kfar Masaryk were the chief beneficiaries. They acquired so much of the requisitioned Arab land that they now rented out parcels of it to some of the Arabs who previously owned it.⁴⁸

In the Knesset a forceful speech against the law was made by Masad Qasis, deputy of a Mapai-affiliated "Arab" party. Among other things he complained that Jewish collectives were given land in some villages still legally inhabited by Arabs, for example Shafa Amr, al-Hamma, Evron; talk of development and security was "sheer deception."⁴⁹

HAARETZ OPENLY said that the purpose of the law was to legalize the seizure of Arab land by Jewish settlements that wanted to expand. "There is no reason to legalize the fact that certain farms exploited the victory of the State in the defense war against invaders, to seize for their own benefit the lands of their neighbors," it said (March 10, 1953). Being politically conservative, *Haaretz* also thought it worthwhile arguing that "seizure of the [Arab] minority's property is liable to undermine the foundations of private property rights."

The Ichud, the only wing of the Zionist movement with a consistent conscience on the subject, naturally spoke out with burning indignation. Here is a good sample from Dr. Shereshevsky, the associate editor of the Ichud organ *Ner*, entitled "We Accuse," addressed to a responsible leader of the Knesset:

[The law's] true meaning is *robbery of*

land from people, inhabitants, of the State. They are agricultural people, like you; they are citizens of Israel, like you. There exists only one difference between them and you: they are Arabs and you are a Jew. This difference seemed to you so great and decisive that you were ready to trespass for it all that is required by the Law of Israel and its tradition.

The name given to this "Law" is but a lie to conceal what has truly been fixed by it so that the public may not realize and know that not the "acquisition" of land—by a mutual spontaneous agreement on either side—is meant, but an *expropriation* of lands that have been seized in an arbitrary and illegal way since 1948. This "Law" puts a stamp of legality on criminal actions, "the taking over of land by kibbutzim and settlements from Arab citizens only because these settlements wanted to enlarge their property" (*Haaretz*). One village of 7000 inhabitants, Um-el-Fahm, has thus lost 110,000 dunams and will remain with only 30,000 dunams. The village of Jatt, of 1450 inhabitants, remains with 1600 dunams. The village of Tireh (4000 inhabitants) is left with 9000 dunams...

It is not on behalf of the Arabs that I am writing this letter. They will know how to defend themselves and their rights... It is not on *their* behalf that I am writing but on *our* behalf, for God's sake "whose name you have profaned among the nations," for the name of the people of Israel, on behalf of our sons and daughters "who have not sinned!"⁵⁰

In the course of a series of articles in the liberal *Haaretz*, Moshe Keren summed up in January 1954, under a subhead which said "Robbery With a Legal Coating":

We consider it our bounden duty to spell this subject out in unequivocal terms: for what occurred here was a case of wholesale robbery with a legal coating. Hundreds of thousands of dunams of land were taken away from the Arab minority—I am not talking here of the refugees—through a whole variety of legal devices. The future student of ethnology will wonder how it came to pass that it was the Jewish people, striving to build their state on the foundations of justice and righteousness and having themselves been the victims of

unparalleled acts of robbery and expropriation, that should have been capable of doing this to a helpless minority. But the fact remains that they were, and even more depressing is the fact that it was precisely those groups who presume to establish a new society free from injustice and exploitation—the kibbutzim, in other words—who marched in the vanguard of the seizure campaign, and that foremost among them were the self-styled fighters for the idea of absolute justice—the kibbutzim affiliated with Mapam—whose representatives in the Knesset are now missing no opportunity to condemn the government for its discriminatory policy towards the Arabs.⁵¹

ALTHOUGH THE MAIN objective of the 1953 Land Acquisition Law was to provide a sweeping legalization of all land-robberies committed up to date against Arabs, it formally presented itself also as a law to provide compensation for the lands that had been and were being stolen.* On the one hand, this allowed the government to present the operation as a respectable financial transaction; on the other, it enabled Zionist propagandists to invent a picture of the law as a veritable boon for the Arabs and another clinching “proof” of the happy life which the Arabs led under the Zionist state.

The law did indeed offer a compensation system, and a number of Arabs did get some compensation. A close look at this compensation system, however, will raise the question whether the measure was designed to ensure fair payment to despoiled Is-

raeli Arabs or to get around making such payment.

One point is basic, before any such consideration is made at all. This is the fact that not even a scrupulously fair compensation system could possibly make up for the injustice that was done to this people by separating them from their land in any way at all. The land was not only the economic sustenance of these Israeli Arab peasants; it was also the root of their family life, social life, culture and identification with their ancestral mores. Stealing their land meant, literally, destroying their way of life, even if a certain number of pieces of gold and silver were placed in their hands. And it must be borne in mind that the Arab could not simply take the money and buy any other land he might want—land was able to go in one direction only, ethnically speaking.

Pieces of money could no more take the place of land in their culture than, say, a refugee Jewish diamond merchant settling in Lhasa could be compensated for the theft of his cutting tools and precious stock by an equivalent value in stocks of Tibetan rancid yak butter, a Himalayan delicacy.

It is important to emphasize this because, otherwise, an unwary reader may absorb the notion that the justice or injustice of the entire land-grab operation stands or falls with the adequacy or inadequacy of the compensation which may be the final outcome for some. It would be better not even to discuss this aspect of the question at all than to further this notion by getting into the financial argument involved. With this warning, however, a few points about the compensation offered by the law are in order.

It should be borne in mind, too, that the compensation offered by the

*The UN's Partition Resolution of 1947, which provided the juridical basis for the creation of the state, had had something to say about land expropriation and compensation, in anticipation of such attempts to take away the minority's land. It provided that the constitution of the new state must embody certain provisions which could not be abrogated by any law or official act, and which were “under the guarantee of the UN” itself. Among these was the following (Chap. 2, Art. 8):

“No expropriation of land owned by an Arab in the Jewish State (by a Jew in the Arab State) shall be allowed except for public purposes. In all cases of expropriation full compensation as fixed by the Supreme Court shall be paid previous to dispossession.” (Emphasis added.)

law was only to Arab peasants who were legally in Israel, and did not refer at all to any who were refugees outside the country. It was therefore an offer of payment for only 300,000 dunams* out of the millions of dunams that had been taken. According to Dr. Peretz's account, "The law was also an attempt to appease the growing sentiments which favored payment to the country's Arab citizens for their requisitioned property."⁵²

ACCORDING TO THE compensation provisions of the law, the Arab owner will be indemnified in money, "if not otherwise agreed" between him and the government. What about his getting land in return for the land taken from him? This was spelled out in the following paragraph of the law:

If the acquired property was used for agriculture, and was the main source of livelihood of its owner, who owns no other land from which he can derive a livelihood, the Development Authority is obliged to offer him, on his demand, other property, either in ownership or in lease, as full or as part indemnity. A competent authority, to be appointed by the Minister, will determine the kind of property to be offered, its location, area, and in the case of lease, the term of the lease (provided it is not less than 49 years) and the value of the property for the purpose of calculating the rate of indemnity, and for the purpose of satisfying his requirements for livelihood, all in accordance with rules to be laid down in regulations.⁵³

So the Arab owner is not to be given as much land as was robbed from him; he is to be given only as

much as befits "his requirements for livelihood," the difference to be made up in money. Who will determine how much he needs for his livelihood? Naturally, those who are engaged in robbing him. In any case, whether this determination is made fairly or not, it is written into the law that these Arab peasants shall be deprived of all land except a subsistence tract, even if the land is legally admitted to be theirs.†

The government decides, subject to court review, what land shall be given in compensation, what kind, where, how much, and whether it is to be granted outright or merely leased to the peasant.⁵⁴

IN CASE OF MONEY compensation, all cash payments are based by the law on the value which the land had in 1950, three years before the law was passed; namely, *before* the devaluation of Israel's currency. Surely a most unusual provision! How could it be justified? In the Knesset debate, spokesmen for the law argued that

The Committee [of the Knesset] had fixed the date to prevent owners from benefiting by any rise in value caused by improvements of the Development Authority.⁵⁵

This might be considered legitimate if it referred to improvements like new buildings, etc. on the land in question,‡ but if that were really

†The aforementioned government pamphlet *The Arabs in Israel* falsely states on p. 25 that the law aims "to provide for appropriate compensation either in land or in cash as desired by the claimant" (emphasis added), even though some details given on the very next page would indicate the falsity of the statement to close inspection.

‡But in a discussion with a New York representative of Israel's Histadrut, I got this interpretation of what is meant by "improvements" from which the Arab must not benefit: e.g., if a new road is built and raises land values around it, including an Arab's land, the latter's land should be evaluated without taking the change into account, for why should "they" benefit from what "we" do? Israeli Arabs are here thought of as "they" (aliens) while only "we" (Jews) are truly of the country; for is it not a "Jewish State"? This is the authentic ethnocentrism of the

*This figure is Dr. Peretz's estimate. The government says, "The total of Arab-owned land involved is estimated at 250,000 dunams," in its propaganda pamphlet, *The Arabs in Israel*, p. 27—Incidentally, the next sentence in this propaganda booklet is a good example of the slickly misleading statements which fill it: "The other 1,020,000 dunams transferred to the Development Authority under the Act was either Government-owned or Jewish-owned land." Thus the disingenuous author distinguishes it from the "Arab-owned land." But all of this land was equally stolen originally from Arab holders.

the consideration involved, it would have been much more straightforward and simple to write into the law the requirement that this deduction was to be made for the purposes enumerated.

But this would not have suited the intentions of the lawmakers since it would have failed to take advantage of the currency devaluation that took place between 1950 and 1953. "In January 1950 the average official value of the Israel pound was \$2.80. At the time of the Knesset debate on compensation, the average official value of the Israel pound was \$1.00."⁵⁶ A piece of land price-tagged 100 pounds in 1950 would have been tagged somewhere near 280 in 1953; but the Arab would be given little more than a third of what it was worth.

Now just to show that it understood this, the Knesset specifically voted into the law a provision which, it claimed, made up for this currency devaluation: the 1950 value, for purposes of compensation, was to be increased by an amount equal to *three per cent* for each year since then. Only three per cent!

In the Knesset, the Arab deputy Masad Qasis (of a Mapai-affiliated "Arab" party) made another point about the 1950 date:

In 1950 Arabs were permitted to sell land exclusively to the JNF [Jewish National Fund, the Zionist agency]. They received no more than £I 25 per dunam and in some places as little as £I 15, whereas the present price was nearer to £I 250 or £I 350 per dunam. Qasis proposed to give the courts power to fix the kind and amount of compensation.⁵⁷

So much for the fairness of the law's provision that three-year-old

Israeli Zionist climate. So the Arab is to be compensated on the basis of what land values were at the time he was robbed, just as if he legally ceased to own the land by virtue of being robbed.

values, not current ones, were to be used as the basis of compensation.

BUT THIS IS ONLY ONE of the factors involved in the reluctance of the despoiled Arabs to settle their claims in accordance with this unjust law. Here is a review of the situation in the January 7, 1955 issue of *Haaretz*:

The least that might have been expected from the perpetrators of this draconic law is that the one constructive paragraph of the law would be implemented with fairness and decency. Official figures disclose, however, that to date, two years after the passage of the law, no more than one thousand compensation claims have been filed, of which only a few hundred have been settled—and that these are mostly the claims of townsmen whose confiscated lands have been merely a small and subsidiary source of their income, and who are only too glad to receive the money offered them by way of compensation, and some rich farmers who suffer from no lack of land and for whom compensation constituted no problem at all. But not one single fellah, among the thousands of DPs concentrated for the most part in the Galilee has so far been the beneficiary of any measure of agricultural rehabilitation. Why?⁵⁸

This is certainly a very striking fact, particularly given the class differentiation which the *Haaretz* writer stresses.* It is precisely the poor peasants

*As for the fact itself, note that the *Haaretz* statement quoted above says "not one single fellah"; and other sources indicate that, even if all Arabs are counted, the overwhelming majority were unwilling to settle or held out for quite some time. Thus in an article in *Haaretz* on January 14, 1955 by Moshe Keren (ref. n. 51) the writer notes that "a certain improvement in the disposition of the land problem has been taking place in this year, the seventh after the establishment of the State of Israel. Some 500 out of the total of 2000 claims filed to date—and out of the thousands not yet filed with the authorities—have been settled through the grant of compensation in the form of money or land, and the rate of progress in the settlement of the problem is gaining speed." (This writer then also goes on to discuss the reasons for the Arabs' reluctance.)—The government propaganda pamphlet *The Arabs in Israel*, published later in 1955, says, "Some 2500 Arabs claims have been filed, of which 700 have so far been settled." (Page 27.)—Back in 1953, a Zionist journalist Maier Asher (ref. n. 46) wrote that there were only two exceptions to the refusal of Arabs to take the proffered land: "the villagers of Makr, near Acre, and Sahr, near Ramle."

who find the law most unjust and unacceptable; the richer have substantially less difficulty in coming to terms with the masters—hence, incidentally, the very existence of those Mapai-affiliated Arab deputies whom we have had occasion to mention, and who are widely regarded as turncoats; but that is another story.

The *Haaretz* writer asked "Why?" Here is his answer:

The officials entrusted with the administration of the Land Acquisition Law reply that the bulk of the DPs refuse to listen to any offer of compensation and insist on being allowed to return to their lands and villages, and that the few who desire rehabilitation in some other locality are only willing to take strictly Jewish lands, that is, they refuse to resettle on the property of absentees appropriated by the Development Agency, which is the only category of land the Government is prepared to grant them.

This is quite true, and in unofficial talks with DPs' representatives they freely admit that they would not think of "soiling their hands with the plundered property of their brethren who fled across the border." And those familiar with the mentality of the Israeli Arabs add that the DPs fear—or maybe hope—that the present situation may be reversed, either through a "second round" or through the detachment of the Galilee from Israel in a peace treaty, as a result of Israel's eventual agreement to readmit the Arab refugees.

In other words, the Israel Arab DPs who are *in* Israel are asked by the government not only to condone the robbery of land from their brothers the refugees, but as a matter of fact to become accomplices to the theft by themselves becoming the recipients of stolen property. One cannot gainsay the cleverness of the scheme from the Zionists' viewpoint: by settling Israeli Arabs on the refugees' property, these will be made willynilly into defenders of the robbery against their people, Arabs against Arabs. But of course the Israeli Arabs regard the stolen prop-

erty as stolen property, and their disinclination to take it is not hard to understand.

From this point, the rest of the script is acted out: The government can now point to the recalcitrants as holding up that measure of Justice which the land-robbery law was designed to vouchsafe, and Zionists can inspire articles everywhere to the effect that this shows, does it not, that the Israeli Arabs are all fifth-columnists who are waiting bloodthirstily for another round of foreign invasion.

In this connection, Dr. Peretz mentions that "The military discovered that often Arabs within Israel, after agreeing to use land of refugees who fled to the Arab States, made illegal payments to the former property owners across the border."⁵⁹ One sees that the Israeli Arabs even tried to square it in their own way, at their own expense; but of course such "treasonous" goings-on could not be permitted by the state.

TO COME BACK to our *Haaretz* writer, his discussion of the situation continues with two other facets of the picture:

But it is doubtful whether this reason alone, which the authorities are powerless to remove, would have prevented the DPs for any length of time from agreeing to resettle even on absentee lands, were it not for some additional delaying factors for which the Government alone is responsible: the endless procrastination, the lack of good will on the part of the responsible officials, the multiplicity of administrative agencies, the bureaucratic confusion which baffles the Arab fellah.

And even when he had finally overcome all these difficulties, the fellah finds out that the Development Agency would grant him no more than 25 dunams of non-irrigated land, the balance of the compensation being paid in money—a few tens of pounds per dunam. So he asks: The money will be spent pretty

soon, and how am I supposed to feed my large family from 25 dunams of barren soil?

And thus the ugly affair drags on month after month, year in year out, to this very day, and the ominous challenge it poses to the moral character of Israel.

With regard to "the lack of good will" mentioned by *Haaretz*, we may also note the statement by Dr. Peretz that "Most Israeli Arabs declare that even after winning court cases against the Custodian, they failed to receive adequate compensation for their losses."⁶⁰

Dr. Peretz goes on to mention, like others, that the government explains Arab reluctance to take land on the ground that they fear reprisals in a "second round," and then he adds:

A more plausible explanation might be that farms offered in exchange for "absentee" property are usually granted on short-term leases and in more or less standard-sized holdings which do not necessarily correspond to the amount of land requisitioned.

This point about leasing rather than giving the land is, then, still another reason for the Arabs' reluctance to accept the law's settlement. (A little more on this question below.)

And finally, as another reason, not quite covered in all that we have given so far, is this one, perhaps the simplest of all: "Many of them avoid filing their claims on the ground that this would be tantamount to signing away their lands..."⁶¹ as indeed it would; and so they hope against hope for real justice.

In this way the above-mentioned law achieved three aims at one time: It established order at home; there are no more illegal land-grabs in Israel; everything is now legal. In addition, the Israel government can now make a show to the world of its decency and justice toward the Arab owners of land which was stolen for "development and settlement." And in addition to all this, the state re-

tains the entire compensation, both the money and the land.⁶²

That is a harsh summary from the pen of an Israeli *anti-Zionist*, M. Stein, but it is in conformity with the facts in the case of the uncompensated "present absentees."

4

"It gives you a queer turn," said one of the [UN] officials who visited the DP camps in Germany and who now works in the steaming, unsanitary camps into which these sorrowful victims of the Palestinian conflict [the Arab refugees] are herded. "If you close your eyes and listen to them, you believe you are back in Bavaria. You ask them where they want to settle, Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, just the way we used to ask the Jews in Germany if they wanted to go to the United States or to South America or to England, and the answer is always the same—'Palestine . . . Palestine . . . Palestine,' exactly as it was in Germany." He shook his head at the overlapping and repetitive quality of agony in our century.

IRWIN SHAW: Report on Israel

THERE REMAIN a few aspects of the land-robbery still to be noted.

The 1950 law provided certain circumstances under which absentee property could be released back to its Arab owner. Did this ever happen? In some cases, but then mostly in the case of urban property like houses—rather than agricultural land, which was the main prize desired from the spoliation of the Arabs.

Hal Lehrman writes, discussing serious criticisms made not only by Arabs but also by Israeli Jews whom he talked to:

The Custodian of Arab Property was empowered by law to exempt absentees who had left their residences for valid reasons, but such exemption, it was asserted, was sparingly given and only in exchange for large fees.⁶³

Dr. Peretz writes, referring to the time in November 1949 when Finance Minister Eliezer Kaplan answered charges in a Knesset debate:

The government classified tens of thousands of Israel Arabs as absentee. But in urban areas only 400 residents of

Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem who had never left the country recovered some of their property, according to Kaplan. The non-urban property of "several score" Arabs was also released. The Custodian issued a total of 209 certificates releasing property to its Arab owners. Maintenance grants from the income of absentee property were made by the Custodian to "several families of absentees in Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem." There were also a few instances in which merchandise was returned to Arabs after they proved their ownership.⁶⁴

And later:

In urban areas the Custodian returned over 2000 dwellings to their Arab owners who had been classified as "absentees" by 1953.⁶⁵

The *Jerusalem Post* reported on October 10, 1952 that, as of August 1, 828 houses, 276 plots, 22,127 dunams of land were returned upon the recommendation of the Committee.⁶⁶

And in those cases where a house was returned to an Arab owner, he might find himself stuck with a tenant in that house whose rent had been fixed by the Custodian, because it was "absentee"-owned, at a specially low level. The Jerusalem Rent Court handed down a ruling that the restored Arab owner could not raise that rent, even if only to the prevailing level.⁶⁷ One can have no quarrel with measures designed to keep rents down, especially for the benefit of arrivals from Europe's DP camps, but this was a measure which automatically discriminated against Arabs only, and did not affect Jewish landlords.

NEXT: WE HAVE already mentioned that the government, in allocating compensatory land, tended to give it to Arabs only on lease, rather than outright. In fact—

In many areas the paradoxical situation arose in which the Custodian rented "absentee" property to its original owners. All the Arabs of Kfar Ilit near Nazareth

were declared "absentees," although half of them had never left, not even during the fighting which occurred in the village. After the war, those who remained were forced to pay rent to the Custodian for the use of their own lands.⁶⁸

Truly a fantastic situation, in which "absentees" are so thoroughly present that they are kindly permitted to rent their own land from those who stole it, and where the land itself is so far from being urgently needed for "development and settlement" that, indeed, there is no one to cultivate it except the very Arabs who have been dispossessed of it... As Dr. Peretz explains when he mentions that the Custodian at one point leased 100,000 dunams to Arabs:

The move resulted from pressure by the Arab minority, Jewish political groups sympathetic to the minority, and *government failure to recruit enough Jewish settlers to farm all cultivable absentee land*. About 5000 Arab families—between 25,000 and 30,000 people—in nearly 100 villages were each granted yearly leases of 20 dunams. *In most cases the land was leased in exchange for property commandeered by the Custodian.*⁶⁹ [Italics added.]

If it is a matter of compensating for property "commandeered" by the Custodian, why then isn't the land given outright, rather than leased? The answer suggests itself: as long as the land is only leased, the Arab protest is temporarily stilled but the land itself still belongs to Jews and the Arab tillers can always be eventually squeezed out. Thus the authorities reason, for the land-grab is not over; but meanwhile the state badly needs the food and crops which will be raised by these Arab lease-holders.

The Mapai-affiliated Arab deputy Masad Qasis, in his complaints against the 1953 law in the Knesset,

strongly opposed compensation in the form of leases for land previously owned

by Arabs on the grounds that it would give the government unusual powers over former Arab landowners....

He accused the government and various institutions of holding property illegally and unjustly for other than security or development reasons and wanted to confine their power to requisition of Arab lands which were either actually settled, or used for security purposes. Although the government prevented Arabs from securing ownership of their land, in many places it permitted them to lease their own holdings from the Custodian. Jewish collectives, on the other hand, were given land in some villages still legally inhabited by Arabs. This occurred in Shafa Amr, al-Hamma, and Evron. In such cases talk of development and security was "sheer deception." Qasis, therefore, proposed an unconditional return of the lands to their rightful owners.⁷⁰

BUT IT IS NOT the objective motive of "development and settlement" that governs the over-all policy of the authorities. The question is: development and settlement *by whom?* all citizens of Israel without discrimination, or Jews only? What governs the real policy of the government is an ethnic chauvinism derived from the Zionist ideology. Hence every foot of ground owned by an Arab citizen of Israel has a question-mark over it. Cutting down the amount of land under Arab holding becomes an end in itself, even apart from the fact that the "Jewish State" is not going to move Jewish settlers who are squatting on stolen land. Thus Qasis' complaints went on:

Despite their large agricultural contribution, the government refused to restore the *untilled* land which belonged to the 30,000 Arab refugees who legally resided in Israel. The government often prevented Arab farmers from cultivating *unoccupied* land near their own villages. Much of the 300,000 dunams requisitioned under the Land Acquisition Law was *uncultivated*. If the government wanted these lands developed, Qasis

thought it should return them to their owners.⁷¹ [Italics added.]

Restrictions on Arab land-holding point toward an eventually *Araber-rein* Israel. In February 1953 the Ichud raised this question of restrictions, among others, in a sharp attack on the government, in which it linked it with the leasing practices of the authorities:

Why did he [a government spokesman] announce to Arab "refugees" who wanted to set up a village in order to bring waste land under cultivation, that "*no new Arab villages were to be established in Israel?*" Why are lands leased to Arabs for only a one-year period? Does this not prevent capital investments for long-term cultivation and improvements? Do such acts not cause damage to an excellent agricultural area which supplies a considerable proportion of the products so much needed by our population and which save us large amounts of foreign currency?⁷² [Italics added.]

The last remarks do indeed indicate economic motives which come in to play to counter the Zionist-chauvinist ones. Arab agriculture *is* badly needed; Arab-owned or -cultivated land still has to be put up with, at least for the present. So Arab farmers even have to be aided to produce, today (as we intend to discuss in a future article). But no Arab can feel secure in this atmosphere.*

For the land-grab did not end with the 1953 legalization of all previous land-grabs. We have not even discussed—only barely mentioned, on page 13-14—one whole sector of this subject of how the Arab minority has

*An American liberal critic of Zionism, Christian Century editor Harold Fey, reported from Israel that "It is common practice to establish a Jewish land settlement close to an Arab village. If an Arab's sheep strays to land used by the Israelis, the Arab is arrested and may be fined 50 pounds. Encroachments on Arab land are frequent, beginning with the commons owned by the Arab village and extending now to privately owned land. Many Arab villages sit like a duck in a freezing pond, in the midst of a shrinking circle." (Fey, "Israeli Citizen, Class B," Christian Century, Jan. 13, 1954.)

been despoiled of its heritage. That is the method of the "double-play" which depends on expropriation by the military—the proclamation of certain lands as "security areas" for border defense and the mass eviction of the Arab population from these lands, so that they can be replaced with Jewish settlers.

But this fact raises a larger question—the military occupation under which 85 per cent of the Israeli Arab minority live. This military occupation and the land-grab are the two great and overshadowing realities under which the Israeli Arabs exist, beside which everything else is secondary. The military sector of the land-grab, therefore, will be considered as part of a future article on the military occupation as a whole.

SOME READERS may wonder: What possible justification do *Zionists* give for this wholesale robbery of a people? The question is an idle one, for the most part, since virtually all of Zionist literature, with few exceptions, is designed to deny and falsify the fact of the robbery itself. Zionist accounts of the land laws, while dissembling their real meaning and contents, repeat endlessly that the only losers are those bad fifth-columnist Arabs who fled to the enemy out of frothing hatred of the Jews and who are now only whooping it up for war against the state of Israel, etc., etc., etc.

It is therefore enough to establish the facts, as we have done here, to cut through these myths.

But another approach needs a word, since it is given considerable space in the book by the World Zionist-Revisionist leader Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Arab Refugee Problem*, which is a down-the-line propa-

ganda production for the Israel government position:

Israel's Finance Minister, Eliezer Kaplan, stressed in the Knesset on November 23, 1949, that the Israel legislation on Arab abandoned property was patterned on that of India and Pakistan, who were confronted with similar problems growing out of the partition of India in 1947. That resulted in vast exchanges of population with the abandoning of enormous quantities of land and other property. Some 7,900,000 Moslems left India for Pakistan and simultaneously some 5,000,000 destitute Hindu and Sikh refugees arrived in India from Pakistan....

These problems were substantially the same on the Indian subcontinent and in Israel. The legislation dealing with the matter was bound to be construed along similar lines.⁷³

This attempt to establish an analogy with the India-Pakistan exchange of population requires a certain kind of boldness which one can admire. We can note first the question of the voluntary character of the exchange, though that will only get us into the official Zionist claim that all the Arab "absentees" fled voluntarily, etc.—a claim which we have already considered. More to the point, there was no *exchange* at all in the Palestine case, of any kind, voluntary or involuntary. The Israeli Arabs who are now refugees in the Arab states did not get—and are not offered—the property of Jews in those states who move into Israel. This exchange-analogy is a grim jest, quite apart from any criticism of what actually happened in the India-Pakistan operation.

The cream of the jest, however, is to be found a few pages ahead in Schechtman's book,⁷⁴ in a passage entirely unrelated to the exchange-analogy. There we find Schechtman echoing the indignant Israeli complaints against the action taken by Iraq in 1951 when that Arab state

confiscated the property left behind by Jews leaving for Israel in a mass exodus of over 120,000. Tel-Aviv protested vigorously, and quite rightly. But according to the terms of the exchange-analogy, this was sort of the other half of the "exchange"!

BUT ATTEMPTS at propagandist justification like this are exceptional. For the most part it is simply a question of burying the truth. In his burning denunciation of the 1953 land law which we have quoted in its place, Dr. Shereshevsky of the Ichud proclaimed that "The Jewish people in the whole world" will know the truth and "will not put up with it. . . ." Unfortunately he was wrong. Most particularly in the United States, not only the Zionist press but the general Jewish press, with the general press mostly going along, has performed prodigies in propaganda and public relations to falsify and suppress any part of the truth, thus keeping it from the Jewish people and all other people.

But would "the Jewish people" put up with it if they knew the truth? Dr. Shereshevsky raises the question. It reminds us that the Ichud people, though sterling liberals and honest democrats, are still enmeshed in the Zionist ideology. "The Jewish people" is no monolithic entity that will or will not put up with it; it spreads over the political spectrum.

This is also what is disturbing about one of the constant refrains of those Israeli liberals who do tell the truth about the Arab minority. They tend to pass the guilt off onto the backs of "the Jewish people." The reader can see a typical example of this in the quotation from *Haaretz's* Moshe Keren on page 20-21: how could "the Jewish people" do this to "a helpless minority" when it has itself

been the victim of robbery and exploitation and has so often vowed itself to righteousness and justice?

One must respect the motives of this breast-beating, but the content is distressing. It was not "the Jewish people" who did this. In other mouths, such a sweepingly false and slanderous accusation would sound sinister indeed. It was not "the Jewish people" but the Zionist authorities, the Zionist movement, and the Zionist government that bear the responsibility; and the difference is enormous.

Such sweeping attribution of guilt to a whole people, for crimes committed by some among them, is more familiar as a methodological habit of anti-Semites and other racists. It is dangerous. In the present case the conscientious Zionist liberals apply it to their own people, whom they love, whereas the anti-Semites apply it to an alien people whom they hate. This great difference bespeaks the virtues of the liberals, but the dangerous similarity bespeaks the pitfalls of the Zionist identification of all Jews as one nation and of world Jewry with the state of Israel. Here we touch upon that common axis from which Zionism and anti-Semitism branch off in opposite directions as bisymmetric phenomena.

HAL DRAPER

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 231-2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 236, 238.
7. Yaakov Aviel, "The Arabs Among us," Article III, *Haaretz* (Tel-Aviv), Jan. 7, 1955.
8. Peretz (n. 1), v. II, p. 229.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 228, 244.
10. Laws of the State of Israel, Authorized Translation . . . Vol. I, Government Printer, Jerus: Abandoned Areas Ordinance, No. 12 of 5708-1948.
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17. Ibid., p. 248.
18. Ibid., p. 248-9.
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21. Schechtman (n. 14), p. 97.
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European Socialism — I: Post-War Evolution of The Italian Movement

The article by comrade Libertini is the first in a series of discussions by European writers dealing with recent socialist history and with current problems in the reconstruction of European socialism. Future articles will include discussions of England, Germany and France.

It is not easy to summarize in a few pages the numerous problems and events which make up the background of the crisis of Italian socialism, a crisis begun in the early 'twenties, and in no way resolved as

yet. Within the framework of this article, I had to confine myself to a description of the main facts and trends; I must apologize for leaving aside particular questions which, although interesting, were not fundamental.

For our purposes, the crisis of Italian socialism can be divided into three distinct phases: the formative period of the party after the collapse of the fascist regime; the period of splits during the cold war; the present period, in which the problem of socialist unity is playing an increasingly important role.

Italian Socialism at the Close of World War II

Twenty years of fascist dictatorship wiped the Socialist Party off the political map of Italy: all the more so as the fascist offensive rushed in through the gap opened by the ideological and political crisis of the socialist movement. The communist split in 1921 had deprived the Socialist Party of its whole youth organization and, in general, of its younger leadership: the most resourceful, militant and theoretically creative cadres. Their departure threw the party into a deep ideological crisis, reducing it to complete paralysis and producing a split between the maximalist and reformist currents.* After the victory of fascism, the traditional leaders of the movement went into exile, taking with them the recollection of a glorious past and a record of political bankruptcy. In spite of the efforts of a few devoted militants, they lost contact very early with the situation in Italy. No serious and systematic effort was made to maintain the illegal underground existence of the socialist movement.

In the meantime, the Communist Party eliminated its ultra-left sectarian faction (Bordigha) and began to elaborate an original ideology under the leadership of Antonio Gramsci. On the organizational level it remained strong and active, partly owing to the material and political help of the Comintern. The communists thus became the leading cadres of the anti-fascist resistance and remained the only workers' party surviving in Italy. The conditions of illegal existence prevented the full impact of the Communist organization in Italy: in the underground struggle ideologi-

cal questions, especially those concerning an unknown and far away situation, never became burning issues.

When, as a result of the Allied victory, the fascist regime came to a miserable end, the Communist Party reaped the benefits of its long and tenacious underground activity, and rapidly placed itself in controlling positions both in the anti-fascist political movement and in the partisan army.

The socialists, on the other hand, suffered the consequences of their prolonged inactivity and ideological crisis.

The party was re-established in the last days of the fascist regime by a merger of two age-groups: the representatives of the pre-fascist generation, grown old and inactive in exile, and young people who had emerged from the schools and institutions of fascism with a great enthusiasm for socialist ideas but who were almost completely lacking in political experience. The new leadership of the unified party (PSIUP) was formed by the exiles, among whom Nenni and Saragat were the outstanding personalities; by the reformists who had stayed in Italy and had remained inactive during the dictatorship (Romita, Simonini, Vernocchi, Perrotti); by the representatives of the new generation (Zagari, Vecchietti, Vassalli, Bonfantini); finally, by a few individuals of an intermediary generation who had fought in the anti-fascist underground in Italy (Andreoni, Pertini, Basso, Viotto). This leading group was completely heterogeneous: it not only lacked a common political basis but assembled men who had lived through dissimilar and contradictory experiences and who, in some cases, had lined up on opposite sides of several political and personal issues. The party organization was almost nonexistent, even though masses of people had

*The split, which occurred in 1922, ended in 1930 with the merger, in Paris, of "unitary" socialists (Turati) and "maximalist" socialists (Nenni).

flocked to the socialist banner: there were millions of sympathizers, hundreds of thousands of party members, a handful of secondary cadres and no serious organizational structure.

This party, with a skeleton not of steel but of putty, was suddenly burdened with the weight of the two basic problems of the post-war period: relations with the communists and relations with the Western capitalist powers.

The Anglo-American High Command in Italy favored very early the formation of an anti-fascist government which could be opposed to Mussolini's puppet government in the North. At the same time, it made every effort to limit the influence and the power of the Anti-Fascist Front and to impose an agreement with a completely discredited monarchy. Within the Anti-Fascist Front, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party as well as the small Action Party were strongly opposed to any compromise with the monarchy. This situation suddenly changed when Palmiro Togliatti, returning from a long exile in Moscow and from a brilliant career in the Comintern hierarchy, arrived in Italy to take command of the Italian Communist Party.

Togliatti had returned to initiate the policy of "national unity," involving the alliance of all anti-fascist currents with the monarchy against fascism. The sudden turn in the PCI's line left the Socialist Party isolated and compelled it to yield. A compromise was reached with the monarchy on the following terms: a provisional regency was to be established until a popular referendum and the Constituent Assemblies would decide on the institutions of the new regime; Umberto of Savoy, the son of Victor

Emmanuel III, was to be the regent.

The polemic around this "Salerno turn" of the PCI (Salerno is the town where the Provisional Government was formed) is still a live issue in Italian politics. The PCI leaders attempt to justify their policy by two reasons: the need for unity against the nazi-fascist regime, and the need of avoiding a civil war, which would have given the Anglo-American army an opportunity for crushing the working-class organizations of all tendencies, on the Greek pattern. The socialists answered that there was no intention on their part of weakening the war effort against Hitler by civil war, but to prevent the social forces responsible for the fascist regime to make their reappearance behind the shield of the monarchy. The successful outcome of the referendum which abolished the monarchy was interpreted by the communists as a confirmation of their policy. The socialists, however, replied that even though the republican battle was formally won, the compromise with the monarchy cost the Italian working-class the reestablishment of the old reactionary State apparatus. Moreover, the socialists pointed out, Togliatti did not return to Italy to advocate a tactic determined by Italian circumstances but to apply, in collaboration with the Anglo-American High Command, the agreements of Yalta and Teheran dividing the world into spheres of influence. The man who arrived in Salerno was no longer a communist leader but an ambassador from Moscow on a diplomatic mission.

THE BATTLE FOR OR against "national unity" again raised the problem of relations between socialists and communists. Since 1934, these relations were governed by the "Unity of Action Pact," a product of the "Popular

Front" policy of the Comintern, which was signed in Paris between the exiled leaders of the Socialist and Communist Parties, and which was renewed in 1941, in 1943 and in 1944. The pact was justified by the influence which the PCI maintained over large sections of the Italian working-class and by the need for class unity in the fight against fascism and for socialism. A document of the PSIUP leadership, written in 1944, is a good statement of the party's position towards the communists and the USSR at the time. It expressed the "conviction that, when the existence of Russia is threatened, the working-class must subordinate everything to its defense. But this criterion does not involve a permanent choice between the particular policies of the Soviet Union, which has reached the conservative stage in its revolution, and the specific policies of the working-class in the countries which have yet to make their revolution. . . . The socialists are aware at the same time of what the Soviet Union represents in Europe and in the world and of the need for an independent policy for the working-class movement. The unity of action, to which they remain unalterably attached, would have no meaning unless it implied the translation in common political terms of the experience and the aspirations of the Italian working-class. The gymnastics of the "turns" is not healthy for the unity of action, and the socialists cannot accept the method which substitutes orders from above to experience from below."

In this writer's opinion, this position, although reflecting great political confusion and above all mistaken notions on the nature of the Soviet Union, was nonetheless adequate to the post-war situation in Italy, where a sharp break between the communist

and the socialist masses would have led to a heavy defeat for the whole working-class movement. At the same time, the situation called (and still calls) for socialist independence and initiative—the contradiction here is only apparent.

However, this document of the PSIUP leadership did not reflect the orientation of the majority of the party at that time. It was rather a skilful Nenni-style compromise between various orientations and moods existing in the party. In fact, the "unity of action pact" became a dangerous instrument (which, it should be noted, not even the extreme reformist wing found the courage to oppose at the time) due to the presence in the party of a strong pro-Stalinist current, which passively accepted the political leadership of the PCI. A former communist leader, who left the party in 1951, writes from experience in one of his books:*

The PCI considered the Socialist Party as its most important front organization, an instrument by which to influence large masses of workers and of petty-bourgeoisie.

The organizational efficiency of the Stalinists ensured their control of many Socialist Party sections. Among the secondary leadership of the PSIUP, many were convinced that socialism would inevitably be established through a victory of the PCI; they became communists in good faith and hence agents of the PCI. Unnecessary to add, their ranks were strengthened by another kind of pro-Stalinists, whose convictions were determined by opportunism alone.

The existence within the PSIUP of a large pro-Stalinist current turned the "unity of action pact" into a one-way proposition. In the name of

*Paolo Emiliani: *Dieci anni perduti*, Nistri-Lischì, Pisa, 1953.

working-class solidarity, the PSIUP submitted to the demands of PCI and Russian policy, and the pact between the two organizations became a transmission belt with an engine controlled by the Stalinist leadership.

This was the setting in which the Stalinist leaders opened a massive offensive aiming to merge socialists and communists in a single party, a policy which led to the forced absorption and dissolution of the Socialist Parties in Eastern Europe. The Stalinist offensive met with great initial success. At the first National Council of the PSIUP, meeting in Rome in August 1945, a motion prevailed which declared that "a unified party of the working-class must be established as soon as possible on the basis of the two great workers' parties." The same motion demanded "that the coming Congress of the party settle this fundamental question." The minority motion (21 per cent of the votes) supported the "unity of action pact" but also advocated "the autonomous existence and independence of the two proletarian parties." Nenni signed neither of the two motions, Saragat signed the second.

At the Party Congress which met in Florence in April 1946 (the 24th), this "fusionist" offensive was defeated by the resistance of the "autonomists." These latter went to battle divided into two factions: the reformists of "Critica Sociale" and the "Iniziativa Socialista" group, which could be described as "independent Left." The Iniziativa Socialista tendency was composed mostly of young and very young people who, although devoid of means, of experience and of an organization, found considerable support in the rank-and-file. From a total of 736,441 party members, 83,781 votes went to the policy motion of Critica Sociale, while Iniziativa So-

cialista received 300,062 and the Stalinist current 338,346. Even the Stalinists were compelled to advocate the autonomy and independence of the party in their motion!

Since the perspective of the merger had been buried at the Congress, one alternative only remained: alliance with the communists but autonomy of the party. Two months later, at the first legislative elections after the collapse of fascism, this decision was approved by five million voters. The PCI, although organizationally much more powerful than the socialists, received fewer votes: this was the great and significant surprise of the elections.

It seemed as though the Florence Congress and the electoral victory would provide the impulsion for the socialist movement to expand, and to create an ideology, an organization and a homogenous leadership. However, one year later, the climate of the cold war began to spread over the world and the shadow of a split began to loom over the Socialist Party.

The Socialist Movement and the Cold War.

The first socialist split—both in time and in terms of importance—occurred in January 1947, when the leading groups of Critica Sociale and of Iniziativa Socialista left the party, followed by a part of their base and by 53 deputies in Parliament. Together, these forces formed the "Partito Socialista dei Lavoratori Italiani" (PSLI) while the rest of the party took the name "Partito Socialista Italiano" (PSI).

The second split, of a much lesser importance, followed in 1948: a small petty-bourgeois group left the party under the leadership of Ivan Matteo Lombardo, to which Ignazio Silone associated himself. The PSI went into

the 1948 elections under a common ticket with the CP while the PSLI, together with this second small group, formed "Socialist Unity" tickets which received two million votes.

The third split, after the defeat suffered by the "Popular Front" and by the PSI at the polls, followed in 1949 and was led by Giuseppe Romita, who defended an independent position in the PSI but actually followed an opportunist policy of his own. This group left the PSI at a time when the left wing of the PSLI was about to break with Saragat's party in protest against the latter's support of Christian-Democracy. These two off-splits met to form a third socialist party, the "Partito Socialista Unitario" (PSU). The political basis of the new party was independence towards the Stalinists, a militant class line and a general Third Camp position on international affairs. It was followed by 19 parliamentarians. In 1951, however, Silone and Romita decided to scuttle the PSU and led their followers into Saragat's party (PSLI). The result of this merger was the present "Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano" (PSDI), that is Italian Social-Democracy under its present form.

The PSU had come into existence in answer to a specific need, and its disappearance left a political void that could not remain permanent. Very soon a section of the new social-democratic party rebelled against Saragat and Romita, while a part of the PSI rebelled against Stalinist policy. At the same time two deputies and their followers resigned from the PCI (Cucchi and Magnani) over the issue of internal democracy and national independence. These three groups joined together to form the "Unione Socialista Indipendente" (USI).

At the end of this period of splits

and mergers, Italian socialism was divided in its three principal components of today: the PSI, the PSDI and the USI.

This complex and tormented period of splits is difficult to understand if two essential elements are not kept in mind: the lack of an ideologically homogenous and independent leadership in the socialist movement, capable of keeping a large organization under control; secondly, the condition of colonial subjection into which Italy had fallen at the end of the Second World War.

Within the PSIUP, the "Iniziativa Socialista" tendency stood alone in advocating an independent policy for the party, and in attempting to elaborate an ideological basis for such a policy, that is, in refusing to accept the compulsory choice between the two blocs. But, as we have pointed out earlier, this tendency was composed of young people without experience and know-how, and disposed neither of financial means nor of an organization. The "Critica Sociale" tendency, on the other hand, under the political leadership of Saragat, had already decided in favor of the "Western" bloc and of American hegemony, while the so-called left tendency had accepted the leadership of the PCI and hence the theory and practice of the Russian "leader-State" differentiating itself from the Stalinists only on tactical issues.

Moreover, the battle did not take place in the realm of ideas and political orientation alone. Italy had just emerged from a disastrous war. It was covered with ruins and terribly impoverished. A country with millions of unemployed or underpaid workers, whose moral nerve had been first struck by fascism, then by the consequences of a lost war, was an ideal field for all forms of corruption. The

American-led bloc was struggling to keep Italy in its own influence-sphere and under its control; the Russian bloc made every effort, after 1946, to split Italy from the "West" or, at least, to alter its political and social balance in the interests of its own policy. The Socialist Party was the keystone of Italian politics and, given the relationship of forces in Parliament and in the country, its orientation was decisive for the orientation of the whole country. It was obvious that an all-out effort would be made by both camps to capture the Socialist Party for their own interests, and the party was in no condition to resist this terrific two-fold pressure.

AFTER THE DEFEAT of the "fusionist" theses at the Florence Congress, the Communist Party counter-attacked on the organizational level, trying to build an apparatus of its own agents within the PSI. In this move, the Stalinists disposed of several advantages: of the men they had injected earlier into the PSIUP; of the ties which had been established on the grass-roots level between socialist and communist locals; of large and diverse financial resources (derived in part from their control of the trade-unions and co-ops). They were greatly helped by two men who, in this writer's opinion, cannot be considered in any sense, at any time, as Stalinist agents, but who objectively favored the Communist Party's enterprise: Pietro Nenni and Lelio Basso.

Nothing is further removed from Nenni's mind or temper than Stalinism. His background is that of a republican; it has been pertinently observed that his republicanism is flavored by a considerable skepticism towards his own party and towards people in general. A characteristic and profound lack of theoretical training

and interest, a readily-available human sensitivity, an acute and exceptional political sense; these are the main elements that make up Nenni's personality as a political leader. As he moved to the "left" of his republican feelings, he could only accept the ideological guidance of the PCI, which helpfully came to fill the void left by his ignorance in theoretical matters. A strong dose of pragmatism and of skepticism led him to adopt a detached, "historical" view—actually a cynical view—of the Russian reality, but did not prevent him from keeping strong roots in the Italian working-class. For various and legitimate reasons this man rejected the social-democratic alternative, but only to succumb to the Stalinist power; he was never able to develop an independent political position. His prestige and his human and political qualities exerted a determining influence on many socialists in favor of unity with the Stalinists.

The case of Lelio Basso is significant and instructive in a different way. Contrary to Nenni, he has a thorough theoretical training, but his ideology is schematic, at times of a theological cast. Basso constantly reasons from a class position, and therefore rejects all right-wing solutions of a bourgeois-democratic or reformist type; then he remains imprisoned in the logic of "staying with the working-class at all costs" and avoids expressing the slightest of the numerous criticisms of the Communist Party which he privately shares with many other socialists.

In the period preceding the first split, Basso attempted the daring operation of placing the Socialist Party in the lead of the "Popular Front," but he was under the illusion that this could be done without stating the political problem in clear terms. In-

stead, he tried to compete with the Communist Party in the field of organizational maneuvering alone. On this level, he was beaten in advance: the Stalinists used him to consolidate their hold on the Socialist Party and then, being fully aware all along of his "unreliability," arranged to have him removed from the Secretariat on the eve of the party elections.

The resistance of "Iniziativa Socialista" to the pro-Stalinist offensive of Nenni's and Basso's faction was wavering and uncertain. The independent left was beaten on the organizational level, and it lacked clarity in its ideas and perspectives: it failed to realize, above all, how urgently a solid organization and a clear program would be needed in the coming period. Consequently, it was ground to pieces by the two conflicting tendencies which represented, within the Socialist Party, the greatest military and political powers in the world.

As a result of the weakness of "Iniziativa Socialista," the real leadership of the opposition against the Stalinist capture was assumed by Giuseppe Saragat, who gave battle on increasingly reformist and pro-American positions. It has by now become public knowledge that the split was pre-certain foreign and Italian circles; pared by Saragat in consultation with from the beginning, he had the full support of the bourgeois press, of certain American trade-unions, of the American authorities in Italy. The financing of the new party was undertaken by the same circles, and corruption based on patronage, a tradition of Italian government, did the rest. From its beginnings, the PSLI was a creature of the "Western" bloc, a certain verbal leftism notwithstanding.

As the following splits show, the split of 1947 did not end the crisis within either of the two sections of

Italian socialism. In reality, there had remained between the PSI and the PSLI an uncommitted mass of socialists with an electoral strength of one million, perhaps one million and a half: this mass appears clearly in the differences between election results from 1947 to 1956. The fluctuations of this mass determined the strength and the relationship between the two socialist parties which remained in this way, in spite of everything, two communicating vessels. In addition, numerous "autonomists" had remained within the PSI in 1947, both of the reformist type and of the "Iniziativa Socialista" type. In the PSLI, a rank-and-file current faithful to the cause of socialist unity and independence was also able to maintain itself for a long time.

THE PSI, WHICH had been led to the elections by Nenni and Basso on a common ticket with the Communist Party, soon entered a new and very serious crisis. The elections of 1948 registered the refusal of the Italian workers to accept a Russian perspective, and were a disaster for the "Popular Front." Most of all, they were a disaster for the PSI within the "Popular Front." All over the country Stalinist deputies were elected with socialist votes. In comparison with June 2, 1946, the CP increased its representation from 102 to 141 deputies; the socialists of the PSI declined from 109 seats to 42. A defeat of this magnitude could not remain without serious internal consequences. On the demand of discontented and rebellious party members, an extraordinary Congress was called (Genoa, June 1948) where the "autonomist" motion of a new centrist current received 227,609 votes, as against 161,-

556 for Nenni and Basso and 141,886 for the "autonomist" right-wing of Romita. A miracle had occurred which no one would have believed possible a few months earlier: the hold of the Stalinist apparatus over the PSI had been temporarily broken. Unfortunately, the centrist tendency, after taking over the leadership of the party, soon revealed itself incapable of maintaining its own positions. Ridden as it was with all the traditional weaknesses of the "autonomist" left—lack of ideological clarity, lack of a homogenous leadership, lack of financial resources, lack of organizational cohesion—it was afraid to openly fight the pro-Stalinist opposition on the political and organizational level. The latter, supported by powerful financial means, re-conquered the party within a year. At the Florence Congress of May 1949, Nenni received 220,600 votes (51 per cent) as against 160,525 for the "autonomists" and 41,133 for Romita's faction. The Stalinist apparatus once again took control of the party and exercised its power more heavily than ever before, eliminating every organized opposition and transforming the party into a branch of the Cominform. The 29th Congress, held in Bologna in 1951, showed the end of political debate and its replacement by Stalinist litanies. Nenni's report read: "As we increasingly identified ourselves with the proletariat, we increasingly identified ourselves with the communists." This unbelievable statement reflected the stifling of every socialist initiative and the servile subjection to the Stalinist power.

At Nenni's side, Morandi took control of the party organization and began to wield its power in a ruthless and bureaucratic manner. In fairness to Morandi, it must be recognized that he was the only one, among the

top leadership, to raise the problem of the re-organization of the party and, more generally, of the modernization of the socialist movement. He made a serious and systematic attempt to build up an organization on the local level, to select and educate young cadres, to lift the party out of exclusively electoral and parliamentary pre-occupations and to turn it into an instrument of mass-struggles. But these organizational achievements were not at the service of a socialist policy; the party became more efficient as an organization but remained a specialized sector of the Stalinist mass-movement.

The course of the social-democratic movement was equally erratic from 1947 to 1953. We have described above how it absorbed, one after another, the various groups that left the PSI, then splitting, but only to recover the off-split together with the Romita group (at the time of the fusion of the PSLI and PSU). But throughout this period, and this is a major difference with the PSI, the leadership of Social-Democracy never once escaped Giuseppe Saragat.

Social-Democracy paid a high price for the consolidation of the right-wing leadership: a continuous loss of members and of votes. After the 1947 split, the PSLI received about two million votes. Ever since, its leadership has become more numerous while its base has narrowed. The passive participation in clerical "Center" governments naturally attracted the opportunist wing of the PSI and tired leaders who had no longer strength for a hard-fought class-struggle, but it repelled the organizers and local cadres who had led their sections out of the PSIUP in 1947 to defend socialist independence, but who were not prepared to provide a left cover for an opportunist leadership. Except in

certain regions of Northern Italy, Social-Democracy gradually lost its characteristics as a mass party and became an aggregate of personal cliques and a vote-getting machine; its role in the trade-union split strengthened this trend.

The "center" coalition, which has expressed all these years the policy of the leading circles of the Italian bourgeoisie, was made up of the Christian-Democratic Party with its small Social-Democratic, Republican and Liberal satellites. In 1948, Christian-Democracy received the absolute majority of votes and of seats in Parliament, in part because of the identification of the workers' parties with Russia, but continued to request the participation of the three minor allies in government. These latter became its hostages and the left cover for the clerical majority. This formula, which was supported by the United States for its own purposes, was rationalized in the PSDI by a sort of Center-coalition super-ideology labelled "democratic solidarity," a negation of all socialist principles. A new electoral law, designed to ensure a perennial majority for Christian-Democracy—which was defeated by popular referendum on June 7, 1953—was supported by the social-democrats in the name of "democratic solidarity." On foreign policy, the common denominator of the "Center" coalition became the most supine and passive support to the Atlantic Pact and to American policy. In view of these facts, it is hardly surprising that Social-Democracy dropped from two million votes and 33 deputies in 1948 to 1.3 million votes and 19 deputies in 1953, losing at the same time all characteristics of a class party, also in its social composition.

At the time when international tension was at its peak and the Korean

war had reached its greatest intensity, Italian socialism, a living reality in terms of organizations, popular support and electoral presence, was completely inexistent as an independent political force, and its two segments were mere appendices of the two opposing blocs.

This is the situation which explains the rise of the "Unione Socialista Indipendente" (USI). The formation of the independent socialist movement deserves closer attention not only because of its direct repercussions, but because of the influence of its ideas which extends far beyond the limited scope of the organization. The movement arose from a merger of small groups of ex-communists and of dissidents from the socialist parties, on the common basis of refusing to be blackmailed into a choice between the two blocs and of opposing the subordination of the socialist movement either to the clericals or to the Stalinists. Naturally this negative position was not in itself sufficient for an ideological and political platform, and in time the independent socialists elaborated a specific program and a strategy. No doubt, serious tactical mistakes were made in the beginning. For a long time, the independent socialists were undecided whether to set up a real party or a loosely organized propaganda group. This problem was solved by the organization of a propaganda league strong enough to intervene in electoral and political struggles whenever necessary. Then, the problem of socialist unity was approached in a way that was too agitational and not sufficiently political. A major problem in the first year was to avoid lapsing into the typical style of an ex-communist movement, based on negative positions rather than on a positive program on different basic issues.

These mistakes were corrected in time and the movement gradually grew in influence, in spite of a serious lack of means—contrasting with the huge war-chests at the disposal of the two major socialist organizations—and in spite of a hard life of isolation, not **only on the political** but also on the personal, individual level. The USI* elaborated a Third Camp position conceived not abstractly but as a tool against the cold war and for international relaxation; it raised the question of the nature of the Russian regime and of the theory and practice of the “leader-State”; it brought new elements into the discussion on the nature of a socialist and democratic community, concentrating on the problems of workers’ control; it explored the possibilities at each stage for an independent socialist alternative and of socialist action within the framework of class solidarity. The weekly of the USI, *Risorgimento Socialista*, became, also within the PCI, the PSI and the PSDI, the voice of specific aspirations for a renewal of Italian socialism.

The Socialist Movement and “Peaceful Co-existence”

After 1952, slowly and haltingly, the climate of the cold war gave way to a more relaxed temper in world politics. Increasingly, the effects of this relaxation made themselves felt in the Italian socialist movement. The leadership of the PSI, Nenni in particular, were quick to grasp the new elements in the situation, while Social-Democracy remained in the trenches of the cold war. The Milan Congress of the PSI (March 1953) took the beginning of a turn towards a new policy. The dominion of the apparatus remained powerful, and the

Congress opened in an atmosphere of sharp hostility towards the USI and other “autonomist” groups. But, mostly on Nenni’s initiative, it also proclaimed a policy of “socialist alternative,” in part to undercut the pressure of the USI and of “autonomist” socialist opinion in general, including the millions of uncommitted socialist voters. The slogan was pregnant with significant developments. If it was to be taken seriously, it had to mean socialist action outside and, if necessary, against Stalinist influences; furthermore, in a country tired of the long clerical rule, it implied the beginning of a dialogue with the Catholic world, offering to the latter a perspective other than that of stagnation and “center-coalition” rule. Above all, “socialist alternative” meant the promise of a change to those voters who ardently desired a new start in political life through a new start of the socialist movement.

Due to this change in attitude, and in spite of its recent Stalinist past, the PSI was able to poll 3.5 million votes three months after the Congress. Counting the independent socialist votes, the total socialist vote now reached almost four million: a promising result, corresponding to the decline of Christian-Democratic electoral strength and to an electoral collapse of Social-Democracy.

Within the context of growing international relaxation, the electoral success of June 7, 1953, compelled the PSI to continue developing the themes of a “socialist alternative.” It also raised the problem of unification of all socialist groups. The politics of the PSI were gradually changing, and the basic feature of the change was that the party, in the course of a difficult and contradictory evolution, was emancipating itself from the compulsion to choose between the two

*Until 1953 the group was called “Movimento Lavoratori Italiani” (MIL).

blocs. Thanks in part to the international situation, the PSI was becoming serious about its neutralist position, which had been a propagandistic device in the past. At first, only the writings and the speeches of the leaders showed symptoms of change but, at the Turin Congress (April 1955) the outline of a new policy began to appear more explicitly. The PSI was moving out of the wilderness where it had been led by the passive acceptance of Stalinist guidance: it strongly re-stated the theme of "socialist alternative" in concrete terms, free of sectarian maximalism, and offered to the Catholics the possibilities of "dialogue" and of "opening to the left." In short, the Turin Congress of the PSI proposed to the country the liquidation of the "center-coalition" and a new policy based on the common struggle of the socialist and Catholic masses.

It soon became clear that the country and the workers received this perspective favorably. In Sicily, where regional elections took place two months after the Turin Congress, the socialists won a spectacular victory.

Yet, the PSI still remained to a large extent under the spell of the Stalinist influence, not only in its relations with the Communist Party but, above all, in its attitude towards Russia. The great majority of Italian socialists, including the independent socialists and a part of the social-democrats, always considered that an independent policy did not necessarily involve a frontal clash with the communists and a break in class solidarity. It will be remembered that the "unity of action pact" as such was never an issue in the polemics that preceded the 1947 split; Saragat himself had signed the pact in November 1946. The controversy hinged on the various interpretations of the pact:

whether or not the pact was being used to stifle freedom of discussion and criticism on the Russian issue. The lack of clarity of the PSI on this point, also after the Turin Congress, contributed to make its new policy ambiguous and to seriously limit its scope.

The solution to this problem appeared unexpectedly in the first months of 1956 as a by-product of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Khrushchev's attack on Stalinist policy and his public revelations—or rather confirmations—on the defunct dictator exerted a liberating influence on the PSI. For the first time after many years, Nenni began to express judgments which were not only highly critical of Stalinism but contradicted the official statements of Khrushchev and of the Russian CP. In the name of his party, Nenni refused to limit the "Stalin trial" to Stalin alone, and attacked the bureaucratic-dictatorial degenerations of the Russian system. Some time after Nenni, Togliatti also ventured to express a similar judgment but relapsed into silence as soon as Moscow expressed its disapproval. Nenni, on the other hand, maintained his stand.

Thus it became possible for the PSI to move from the policy of "socialist alternative" to the policy of socialist unity.

Already in the administrative elections in May 1956, the PSI took a step towards socialist unity by reconciling and allying itself with the USI, which had maintained its positions of independence and its opposition to the Stalinist ideas and methods throughout the preceding period. Its new attitude of independence and its alliance with the USI strengthened the PSI by about 600,000 votes. After the administrative elections, the stage was set for the second step towards social-

ist unity; drawing the PSDI closer to the PSI and the USI. Important changes, both within Social-Democracy and in the general political situation, contributed to make this step possible.

Within the PSDI, the center-right leadership continued to rule, but had to face a growing left opposition and, above all, a strong movement towards socialist unity in the party locals in the North. In Parliament, the crumbling of the "center-coalition" majority, which today rules by a margin of nine votes, forced the PSDI to revise its policy, and the progress of international relaxation has reduced the power of the anti-unity pressure exerted by the Western powers in Saragat's party.

We have thus reached current events, which we need not discuss here in detail.

The Problems of Socialist Unity.

The development of the cold war was a determining factor in the split of the Socialist Party; the process of relaxation, on the other hand, has again raised the issue of socialist unity and, what is more, has made socialist unity possible by diminishing the pressure of the opposing blocs and by blunting the sharp edges of past polemics. At the same time, however, it is obvious that the process of socialist unification has become, even within the context of relaxation, a battleground of the opposing power blocs, who are now playing their game according to different rules. Russian foreign policy has changed. The Stalinist principle "who is not with me is against me" has been replaced by "who is not with my enemies is my friend." Such is the line that determines Russia's new attitude towards the independent Asian nations, towards Yugoslavia, towards neutral

Austria. With a lesser flexibility and ability, American foreign policy has adapted itself to the new attitudes of its adversary; the effects of this change are already making themselves felt in certain sectors of European social and political life.

Within this new context, socialist unity has become the stake in a complicated game of chess between the two blocs, each trying to influence and orient the process according to its own interests. The task of Italian socialists in this situation is of course to make the best use of the new possibilities in order to lift the problem of socialist unity from the level of diplomatic relationships between the two blocs to the level of a socialist ideology and politics. In this sense it can truly be said that the fight for socialist unity must *necessarily* coincide with the fight for a new policy involving the liquidation of the Stalinist and Russian handicap on the one hand, of the reformist and "Western" handicap on the other. Today, the socialist movement alone is in a position, by following a policy of militancy and independence, to open up a progressive perspective for the working-class and for the country in general.

This is the present position of the independent socialists, of wide circles in the PSI and of certain circles of the PSDI; but, until such a policy can be translated into action, a great deal of work remains to be done.

IN ITALY, A NEW socialist policy implies the solution of four fundamental problems: relationships with the Catholic world; relationship with the communist world (six million voters, two million members); foreign policy; trade-union policy.

Relationships between socialists and Catholics have always been deter-

mined in Italy by one of two opposed policies, both of which are based on dangerous mistakes. The old socialist tradition is one of anti-clericalism. In itself, anti-clericalism is a deformation rather than an integral part of a class policy, and transfers the struggle from the realm of social relations to the realm of metaphysical controversy. As a basis for socialist policy, it means destroying class unity and giving up any serious attempt to drive a wedge into Christian-Democracy. Even if the communists are included, a "left" majority on an anti-clerical platform is not possible in Italy. This means that if the working-class movement enters into sharp conflict with the Catholics on the religious question, it will condemn itself to a sterile maximalist opposition for another ten or twenty years. Moreover, and this is a more important point, the anti-clerical policy strengthens the domination of the ecclesiastical apparatus on the Catholic working masses and indirectly stifles the maturing of class-consciousness among these workers. It is not surprising that the Vatican does everything in its power to stimulate a new religious war which would smash class solidarity in the factories and in the rural regions among workers and peasants of different religious or philosophical allegiances. Karl Marx remarked that "the struggle against religious prejudice does not occur in heaven but on earth," stressing that religious prejudices are rooted in a given system of relations of production. The recognition of this fact, which is of secondary importance to socialists of other countries, is fundamental for the Italian socialist movement.

The other attitude which has determined, more recently, the policy of large sections of the Italian labor movement is one of readiness to com-

promise at all costs. At times, the policy of the Communist Party has followed this pattern, in conformity with Russian policy: in 1946, for instance, the PCI voted to include the fascist Concordate between Church and State into the Constitution. More generally, and for different reasons, Saragat's party has accepted a passive "co-existence" with the Catholics, conceding vital ground on the question of the lay state and failing to conduct necessary social struggles which could have had the support of the Catholic masses. Furthermore, by its readiness to compromise, it justified the ecclesiastical and Christian-Democratic hierarchy in the eyes of the Catholic masses and in this way helped the hierarchy to inhibit the growth of class-consciousness among Catholic workers.

A new approach is needed, which would reject both anti-clericalism and compromise at all costs, and would tend to establish practical co-operation with the Catholic masses on the basis of solidarity in common problems and struggles. This is an approach involving many difficulties and a number of risks, but it is the only approach capable of setting Italian politics in motion. It may involve, for the socialist movement, participation in government or opposition, depending on the circumstances and on the relationship of forces between classes.

Opening a dialogue with the Catholics implies avoiding a frontal clash with the communists and a break in class solidarity, also on this side. If such a break should occur, any dialogue with the Catholics would become a mere pretext for the absorption of the socialist movement by the clerical-conservative front. On the question of relationships with the communists, it must always be kept

in mind that now the communists themselves are dependent on maintaining working relations with the socialists, even at the cost of submitting to the influence of an independent socialist movement which they would never have tolerated a few years ago. A break with the socialists would not only isolate the PCI, but would also be in contradiction with the "relaxed" policy Russia is following at the moment. The PCI is consequently compelled to accept the new socialist attitude as a "lesser evil."

For the socialists, the problem is to maintain unity of action and class solidarity with the communist workers while resisting Stalinist directives and, above all, while using their full freedom of criticism and analysis in relation to the communist world. This too is a difficult policy, but all other alternatives would lead to the state of affairs which in France reduced Guy Mollet's party to an instrument of the bourgeoisie.

AS FAR AS FOREIGN POLICY is concerned, socialist unity can only be achieved on the basis of a Third Camp position. The Italian socialists are no longer prepared to accept either the theory and practice of the Russian "leader-State" nor the worn-out formulas of the Atlantic alliance. On the other hand, large sections of the PSI and of the PSDI, as well as the whole of the USI, are interested in favoring the process of relaxation between the two blocs. Even though the threat of war has not disappeared permanently, the present international conditions allow for new relationships between States based on co-existence. In this writers' opinion, and in the opinion of the vast majority of the Italian labor movement, the socialists should favor the practice of co-existence even though it does not represent a perma-

nent solution nor involve the disappearance of imperialist pressures and of the class struggle. A climate of co-existence is one in which the socialist movement can grow much more easily than in a climate of open conflict between the two blocs, and the growth of an independent international labor movement represents the strongest guarantee of peace. Finally, only a policy of independence from both blocs can enable the socialist movement to offer the necessary solidarity and assistance to the cause of colonial peoples and of all oppressed peoples in general.

On the trade-union question, the PSI and the USI advocate a policy leading to the unification of all trade-union organizations. In Italy, the socialist split and the cold war have led to a split in the General Confederation of Labor (CGIL). Today, three significant trade-union organizations exist on the national level, as well as a great number of small independent unions: the trade-union movement is in a state of crisis and the economic defenses of the working-class are seriously weakened. The CGIL, which includes the workers of the PCI, of the PSI, of the USI and, locally, elements of the social-democratic Left, is the strongest federation (60-65 per cent of all organized workers). The CISL, with 25-30 per cent of organized labor, is the union of the Catholic workers and of the social-democratic Right. The UIL, which includes social-democratic, Republican and independent workers, is the weakest of the three organizations and mainly tries to exploit local discontent in certain sections of the CGIL and of the CISL; it is notorious for its ties with certain Italian monopolies, in particular FIAT and Montecatini. The point of view which the PSI and the USI hold in common, is that the so-

cialists of the unified party should all be members of a single trade-union organization, the CGIL, but that unity of all trade-union federations should be a goal connected with socialist unity. The PSDI, on the other hand, advocates entry of all socialists in the UIL, and demands that a decision on this question should be reached at the first Congress of the unified party.

Against the new policy of socialist unity, a sharp opposition has arisen from two sides. As soon as socialist unity became a live issue, the European social-democratic Right moved on different levels to absorb the PSI into the conservative coalition or at least to bring about a split in its midst. With the help of Commin, Secretary of the French Socialist Party and a prominent member of the "Atlantic" and right-wing leadership, a much publicized meeting of Nenni and Saragat was arranged at Pralognon. The bourgeois press interpreted this event as a return of the PSI to the social-democratic fold, and has conducted a high-pressure campaign to browbeat the PSI into immediate and indiscriminate unity within the framework of "democratic solidarity." This maneuver failed thanks to the firm attitude of the PSI and to the energetic intervention of the USI, which helped to distinguish the perspective of unity on the basis of independence from the communists from the perspective of unity on an anti-communist and clerical basis. It is probable, however, that other efforts of a similar kind will be made by the leading circles of the bourgeoisie and by the European social-democratic Right. The latter especially attempt to exploit for their own purposes the disarray of the PSI after the Stalinist crisis.

Nor is this the only danger. If the

process of "de-Stalinization" within the PCI—and hence of transformation in a socialist direction—will slow down to a long halt, as seems probable at the moment, one can foresee a communist attempt to isolate the PSI from the other socialist forces and to stifle the policy of unity by means of the old and tried methods and slogans.

THE ROAD TO SOCIALIST UNITY is full of obstacles and difficulties. A firm political position is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to overcome these obstacles. What is indispensable, is a transformation of the structure of the socialist movement. It must cease to concentrate on sterile polemics among the top leadership and must become more and more a real mass organization, a political force in the daily lives of the people, engaged in all important struggles of the workers and peasants, representing within itself the image of the new society. Another pressing task is one of ideological reconstruction. Maximalism and reformism are both dried branches on the tree of the Italian labor movement, and they must be cut. The struggle for power in our country cannot be conducted with purely parliamentary methods nor can it be founded on the expectation of an apocalypse. The pressure of the masses, the development of the class-struggle supported by an effective intervention on the parliamentary level, can alone begin a thorough reform of Italian society. An increasing number of people are beginning to think along these lines, and the growing awareness of this perspective in the socialist movement must be consolidated.

There remains the problem of the goal. The Italian socialist movement must at last commit itself to a judgment on the experience of Russia and

of the Eastern countries; it must define its position on the crisis of Western Social-Democracy and on the rise of socialist forces in Asia and Africa; it cannot postpone any longer an analysis of what the structure of a socialist society actually involves, of the significance of real workers' democracy, of its relationship with workers' control and management of

industry. Only a growing awareness of these new and immense tasks will enable the Italian socialist movement to liquidate the heritages of Stalinism and of Social-Democracy, which have been such a determining factor in its crisis and which still weigh on it today.

LUCIO LIBERTINI

October 1956.

The Labor Movement in Tropical Africa – II

The Status of the Trade Union Movement

The analysis of the trade union movement in tropical Africa is the second in a series dealing with the problems of the working class movement in that area. (The last article appeared in the Summer 1956 issue.) The concluding article, concerned with the economic and social problems in tropical Africa, will appear in the next issue.

THE EXAMPLE OF CHINA in 1927 and of Russia in 1917 shows that even a numerically weak working-class can play a decisive social and political role. Its ability to do so depends on the extent to which it has become conscious of forming an independent community of action, with its own historic aims that require specific political and social tasks.

The history of African trade-unionism, the elementary form of class-consciousness, will tell us to what extent this process is advanced in Africa.

Trade-unionism made its first appearance on the African continent in 1881, the founding date of the South

African Branch of the Amalgamated Carpenters' and Joiners' Union, with two locals, one in Durban and one in Capetown.³⁶ This union, as well as the South African Typographical Union which was founded next, in 1888, were practically British unions. So was the "Knights of Labor" an organization probably founded by miners who had worked in the United States, and who called a strike at Kimberley in 1884. British workers dominated the labor movement in South Africa for a long time, until the Rand strikes of 1907 and especially the strikes of 1913-1914, in mining and railroads, in which workers of Afrikaaner origin played for the first time an outstanding role.

At the end of the first world war, a new strike wave took place under socialist leadership. In 1919 a power and streetcar strike was called in Johannesburg, in the course of which the workers started operating the streetcar service themselves, under a Board of Control which they had set up for this purpose. This strike ended in a complete victory. A month later, municipal workers in Durban took

control of city offices and started to run the services. The Town Council of Durban immediately came to terms and the demands of the workers were met.

This period of struggle culminated in the Rand strike of 1922, which represents a sort of turning point in South African labor history. Its cause was a wage cut by the mining companies and the replacement of 5,000 European workers by African workers at one tenth of the pay. On January 1922, 30,000 European workers went on strike. The government immediately proceeded to mobilize troops. On March 10 fighting broke out, and lasted for nearly a week. Tens of thousands of troops were mobilized, and Fordsburg, a working class district, was shelled by heavy artillery. After the repression, 18 strike leaders were sentenced to death, and four were actually executed.

The strike failed, mainly because it was not extended to other industries, because the African workers were not involved in it and because no attempt was made to mobilize popular support. Its failure was "disastrous for the future development of trade-unionism in South Africa. The best men were either lost in the struggle or black-listed out of employment."³⁷

After 1922, the European labor movement became increasingly flabby as a whole, and particularly in its key sectors: mining, railways and steel. The miners' union eventually became saddled with a corrupt and ineffectual leadership, which greatly facilitated its capture by the Nationalist Party in 1947. The railway unions, which had played a leading role in the labor movement of the early 1920's, declined into insignificance. The Iron and Steel Workers' Union was also captured by the Nationalists. The unions in the secondary industries, on

the other hand, retained a great deal of militancy, but they remained a minority. As a whole, the European labor movement would revise its attitude and its tactics towards class-collaboration, in the face of a rising labor movement among the African workers.

AS IN ASIA, THE first stirrings of African trade-unionism in South Africa were a sequel of the first world war, which had favored the development of an industry employing a relatively stable African labor force. The first African labor union appeared in 1919: the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). Although it had no color bar in its constitution, it was mainly composed of African workers. It was not only a trade-union, but also a general protest movement of Africans, and included from the start many people who were not wage-earners. In this, it showed a characteristic which is typical of African trade-unionism in general: the linking of economic and political demands, which is inevitable in a society where economic and political oppression is so closely intertwined. In spite of strongest government opposition, the ICU rapidly became a powerful mass organization. By 1925, it had branches in almost every part of South Africa, and was sending out organizers to Southern Rhodesia—which were turned back at the border. Proper records of membership were never kept, but its membership was estimated at about fifty thousand at its peak.

The ICU was a forerunner of African trade-unionism also in its weaknesses. From the start, it suffered from fatal flaws in its organization. It was a loose and sprawling movement of protest, fighting against all forms of oppression, half union, half party. Its leadership did not have the necessary experience to cope with the compli-

cated tasks such a body had to face. There were no properly elected organs or executive officers, no clear program, no control of the finances—this in a large, composite movement fighting on many fronts where a firm organization would have been most needed. In 1926 it split; expulsions were followed by resignations, counter-organizations were set up. By 1931 the ICU was practically dead.

As a result of an ICU split, the South African Federation of Non-European Workers was set up in Johannesburg. It mainly organized workers engaged in secondary industries (laundries, clothing, furniture making, etc.). At its peak, it had 12 unions with altogether 3,000 members, and looked like it might succeed the ICU as the leading organization of African labor. However, as the result of factional fighting, it collapsed soon afterwards.

Simultaneously with the rise of the ICU, labor organizations had begun to penetrate among the African miners on the Rand. In February 1920, 71,000 unorganized African miners went on a spontaneous but very well organized strike, which lasted about a week and was crushed by police terror and persecution. Several workers were shot.

Today over 50 African trade unions exist in secondary industries and in commerce. Only a few of them function properly, and they are making little headway, forced as they are to live under conditions of semi-legality, constantly harassed by the government and prevented by law from functioning as real unions. During and immediately after the war, non-Europeans joined trade-unions in great numbers: 200,000 approximately between 1940 and 1945. After 1945, non-European unions declined.³⁸

African men cannot by law be

members of registered trade unions, but have their own separate unions, which have practically no rights of collective bargaining and are prohibited from striking under a penalty of three years imprisonment and a fine of £500. By a curious oversight in the law, African women were not included in these repressive regulations, and were able to join registered trade-unions, particularly in the clothing industry. In 1950, 75,000 Colored, Indians and African women were members of registered trade-unions, affiliated to the South African Trades and Labor Council (SAT&LC). Twenty per cent of the membership of the SAT&LC was non-European at that time; the Western Provinces Council of Labor Unions (WPCLU), a smaller local group, was composed of Colored workers in a proportion of 80 per cent.³⁹

The position of non-European workers in predominantly European unions was described by E. S. Sachs as follows:

Some (European) unions have organized native workers engaged in the same industry in separate sections, and there is some form of co-operation. There are also a number of independent native unions some of which are affiliated to the SAT&LC, but which have little or no voice in that body.

In 1949 there existed a Council of Non-European Trade Unions, which was affiliated to the WFTU. (The SAT&LC never affiliated to either WFTU or ICFTU as it would have split the federation down the middle.)

The last major strike of African workers occurred on the Rand in 1946: sixty thousand miners struck for the recognition of their union (the African Mineworkers' Union, affiliated to the CN-ETU) and for a wage raise to 10 shillings a day. According to official figures, 10 strikers were

killed in the repression, and several hundred were wounded.

There has been no sign of trade-union activity among the one million African agricultural workers, except in Natal, where the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1937 prohibits unions for plantation workers.

It is a well-known tragedy of the South African labor movement that, from the beginning, the bulk of European trade-unions refused to assist the attempts of the non-European workers to organize themselves.

The consequences of this policy on the part of the European labor unions have been ruinous for the labor movement as a whole—not only today, as the unions of both races are being wiped out separately, but since the earliest manifestations of this policy.

In the Rand strike of 1920, the African miners, far from receiving any support from the trade-unions, had to face the open hostility and the scabbing of the European mineworkers. "Two years later, the European mine-workers paid dearly for their stupid and backward policy, for when they came out on strike the Native workers remained at work and, with the help of mine officials, carried on mining operations."⁴⁰ This was the first of a succession of defeats which the European trade-unions suffered as a consequence of their policy.

When the ICU appeared, the majority of European unions remained hostile and refused to take it seriously. When it grew in strength and influence, the European SAT&LC was forced to take notice of it but, in spite of a series of pious declarations, it never accepted cooperation with it on a basis of equality. The rapid decline of the ICU, caused in part by the hostile attitude of the European unions,

relieved the latter of the bothersome necessity of taking a clear position on the matter and of the obligation to help build a strong African labor movement that might have helped them to survive.

Under the pressure of the Nationalist government, the divided trade-union movement has been disintegrating at a frightening rate.

By 1952, the South African trade-union movement was widely split: (1) the South African Trade and Labor Council, then the most representative of all trade-union bodies, including at one extreme unions that support "apartheid" policies and at the other end unions that reject all forms of segregation; (2) the South African Co-ordinating Council of Trade Unions, a fascist body controlled by the Nationalist Party, which includes the Mine Workers' Union and the Iron and Steel Workers (21,000 members in 1955); (3) the Western Provinces Council of Labor Unions, an independent body confined to the Cape Province. There does not seem to have been any good reason for its separate existence from the SAT&LC; (4) a group of independent unions which left the SAT&LC on the "color bar" issue but did not join the SACCTU. Today, an equivalent body exists which is called the South African Federation of Trade Unions (45,000 members in 1955); (5) other independents, such as the railway unions which play a small role (7,000 members in 1955).

In 1954, the SAT&LC was dissolved, after having lost strength steadily, and was replaced by the S.A. Trade Union Council (SATUC) (149,000 members in 1955). The new body announced its intention to "focus opposition to the government's Industrial Conciliation Bill" which aimed at splitting the unions along racial

lines. However, it also expressed its willingness to accept the principle of "apartheid," even in its own ranks, choosing a "lesser evil" policy and robbing itself of the only effective political basis from which to counter government attacks.

In February 1955, the government passed the Industrial Conciliation Act against strong protest from the trade-union movement. The new bill splits the unions and forces those that are affiliated to the S.A. Labor Party to disaffiliate (mainly the Garment Workers and the Engineering Workers).⁴¹

Thus, due to the chauvinistic and short-sighted policy of the majority of European trade-unions, the labor movement in South Africa — and in Southern Rhodesia—finds itself disarmed and routed by the most dangerous form of reaction that has yet appeared on the African continent.

For the sake of the future of the South African labor movement, it must be recorded that a minority among the European workers has always supported the African trade-unions.

In 1915 the International Socialist League, a small revolutionary socialist group which had left the S.A. Labor Party on the war question, for the first time explained the basic principles of trade-unionism to the African workers in their own language. Later, this tradition of internationalism and working class solidarity was continued by the Communist Party, the Trotskyist movement and certain tendencies of the S.A.L.P. When the ICU was founded, W. H. Andrews, a founder of the ISL and later of the CPSA, tried to help with material assistance, and in so doing faced attacks from the European trade-union leaders.

The Garment Workers' Union (18,500 members in 1953) which is predominantly composed of Afri-

kaans-speaking women, consistently showed great militancy and true socialist spirit on this question as on others. It practiced no segregation in its locals, and in recent years helped to organize the South African Clothing Workers' Union, a union predominantly composed of African men who, as we have seen, are legally prevented from joining any European body. Unfortunately, unions such as the Garment Workers' have remained a small minority within the European trade-union movement.

In the other countries of Tropical Africa, trade-unionism was slow in developing before World War II. European trade unionism became important only in Rhodesia—nowhere else were there European workers in sufficient numbers to form the basis of a significant trade-union movement. African unions were inhibited by the same obstacles that confronted similar attempts in South Africa: an unstable, migratory labor force; fierce opposition from authorities and employees; lack of experience in organizational skills.

The first African union appears to have been the railway workers' union in Sierra Leone⁴², which was founded in 1917 and called a strike in Freetown in 1919.*

This is all we hear for ten years or so. During the early 1930's we know of a few trade-union nuclei in Sierra Leone and in Gambia in Nigeria. In Northern Rhodesia the African miners struck in 1935 against an increase in the poll tax—characteristically a political demand. Five were killed in the course of the repression.⁴⁴ In 1940 the African miners struck again; this time 17 were killed and 65 wounded. In this manner the striking workers

*A tobacco workers' union was already organized in Egypt in 1903. (43)

were forced back to work after a few days.

In 1932 the *Trades and Labor Journal* of South Africa reported that a Southern Rhodesia Trades & Labor Council had been formed following the example of the SAT&LC—almost certainly an exclusively European body.

In Madagascar, the French CGT (then a reformist union led by Jouhaux) founded locals for both French and Malagasy workers in 1937, most of whom were directly affiliated to French industrial federations. The first federation to be formed was the federation of civil servants.

In 1938 the CFTC followed suit by organizing the Union des Syndicats Chrétiens de Madagascar, a conservative body very much under the control of the Catholic Church and harmless to anyone save its followers. The administration supported its organizing campaigns to oppose the advance of the CGT: by 1939 the CFTC claimed 13,200 members, of which 10,500 were agricultural workers, while the CGT claimed 997, of which 300 were civil servants.⁴⁵

These feeble attempts at organization received a tremendous impetus during and immediately after the Second World War. Trade-unions developed throughout the continent. The intensification of production and of exploitation, drawing thousands of workers into wage employment, the weakening of the colonial powers, all created the conditions for an upsurge of the labor and nationalist movement which, in many cases, was one and the same. For many Africans, the war and the army acted as a school:

In World War II African troops have fought in the Middle East, Madagascar, Italian East Africa, Ceylon and Burma. The war has given new opportunities and experiences to these Africans. About

12,000 Africans from Kenya alone have learned to operate motor vehicles. The East African Army Education Corps has produced about 500 Africans trained as teachers, information officers, welfare workers, interpreters, and a Swahili paper called *Askari* with a weekly circulation of 8,000. Tens of thousands of soldiers have advanced further during five years of war than would have been possible in two decades of peace."⁴⁶

In Uganda, the first nationalist mass movement was born out of a continuation of political and economic demands raised by Africans who had participated in the war.

"It occurred in 1945, immediately after the war, and it is known as 'Number Eight,' so named after Montgomery's Eighth Army in which many Africans had served. It involved ex-servicemen and it aimed at higher wages, higher prices for agricultural produce and—for the first time—for the participation of African-elected representatives in the central and local governments of the country. After all, the war had been fought in the interests of democracy! It was spontaneous and it aimed at achieving its ends by a general strike and the refusal to sell anything to non-Africans. All roads leading to urban centers were blocked by pickets, to prevent anybody from going to work or from smuggling food to the town dwellers. Its success was enormous, and the government retorted by calling in the troops to shoot down the pickets and terrorize the general population. Many Africans lost their lives—the number is unknown to the present day—and the "ring leaders" were, naturally, deported.

"But 'Number Eight' did achieve solid results. Wages were increased, as was the price paid to cotton growers. At the same time Africans were, for the first time, given the right to have some form of elected representation

in local governments and the rudiments of direct, though hand-picked, representation in the central government."⁴⁷

A political consequence of the strike was the formation of the Bataka Party, a locally limited nationalist group. In 1949 a Farmers' Union was formed, which simultaneously initiated a struggle for more representation in the African Parliament (where most representatives had been nominated by the governments), against the British government's plans to federate the three East African territories and against the monopoly of Asian and European cotton ginneries and exporters. The government broke off negotiations and suppressed the Bataka Party and the Farmers' Union. At the same time, it dissolved the General Transport Workers' Union of Uganda, since most of its leaders had been involved in the political campaign. This reaction only led to increased political consciousness and activity: in 1952 the Uganda National Congress was formed, the first nationalist organization covering all three provinces of Uganda.

In Kenya, an East African Trade Union Council was formed in 1949. In May 1949 it claimed 5,000 members which had become 10,000 by December. In 1950 the government suppressed it⁴⁸; in 1951 the Registered Trade Union Federation of Kenya was founded under the leadership of Tom Mboya, and affiliated to the ICFTU. The campaign against the Mau-Mau has, of course, also been used as a club against the trade-union movement, but without success so far. Of the 13 unions in existence in Kenya in 1952, 5 were African, 3 Asian, 2 African and Asian, and 3 European—the three European unions however, totalled 17 members!

In Uganda, there were at the same

time one Asian and 2 African unions.

In Tanganyika, there was "only one significant union" in 1947: the longshoremen's union of Dar-es-Salaam. In 1949 there were 7 registered unions, of which 5 were African. In 1951, there was only one left, the Asian union. However, the government reported 73 strikes in its annual report to the UN Trusteeship Council, involving a total of 7,851 workers. By 1953, there were 6 unions in existence, of which the largest was the Kili-mandjaro Drivers' Association with 421 members. At the time of this writing, these unions are about to form a Tanganyika Federation of Labor.

Here is the picture for British East Africa:

	Number of Unions	Membership	% of Total Wage-Earn.	Date
Uganda	3	259	0.12	1952
Tanganyika ...	6	...	...	1953
Kenya	13	27,587	6.30	1952*

In West Africa under British rule, the trade-union movement has a longer history and succeeded in establishing itself more solidly earlier.

In Nigeria the Railway Workers' Union is the oldest, and registered in 1939 under the Trade Union Ordinance. During the war unions grew rapidly, and in 1943, 200 representatives of 56 unions met in Lagos to form the Trade Union Council of Nigeria. After the war, two major strikes gave the trade union movement even greater momentum: the general strike of 1945, which started at Lagos, then spread to the railways, the plantation workers and the commercial workers; then, in 1949, the strike in the Enugu coal mines, which was brutally suppressed by the police, several workers being killed. The issue in this strike had been higher wages and better housing conditions.

More recently, 40,000 tin miners

struck for higher wages in November 1955, and in January 1956 40,000 building trades workers also struck for better pay.

The largest unions in Nigeria are those of the railwaymen, coalminers, construction workers and teachers. Several unions are not affiliated to the TUC.

In the Gold Coast, a Trade Union Congress was founded in 1943. At the end of 1949 and in early 1950 the trade-unions called a general strike in support of the Convention People's Party, which was prosecuting its cam-

paign of non-co-operation against the British rule. A buyers' strike took place at the same time. As a result of the strike, several leaders were imprisoned and thousands of workers were fired from their jobs and blacklisted. Today, the GCTUC has approximately 84,000 members in over 60 unions. At the date of this writing, 35,000 mineworkers have been out on strike for the past three months for a 15 per cent wage increase.

The following table shows the development of the trade-union movement in British West Africa:

	No. of Unions				Membership				%*
	1942	1947	1949						
Gold Coast	4	28	41	60 ('55)	913	11,560	38,140	84,000 ('55)	15.1
Nigeria	47	115	129	140 ('51)	18,270	60,030	88,570	152,269 ('51)	50.1
Sierra Leone ..	10	8	7	....	4,500	12,130	15,590	.....	45.7
Gambia	3	2	2	3 ('52)	.....	1,200	1,500	.....	46.6
Cameroons (B)	3	3	....	6 ('52)	.....	11,126	.....	42,300 ('53)	
Togoland (B) ....	....	....	....	....	.....	.....	.....	.....	

*Percentage of wage earners in 1952.

In West Africa under French rule*, the CGT and the CFTC had begun to organize even before the Second World War, but only among European workers. The real growth of the trade-union movement occurred after 1944 when, as a by-product of the Liberation, freedom to organize trade-unions was granted to the natives of colonial territories. Here as elsewhere, the trade-unions were soon linked to nationalist demands.

In Upper Volta, for instance, unions arose in 1946 under the stimulus of the new nationalist party Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA); in the beginning the party and the unions had become a common office and a common leading personnel. In the Ivory Coast, an Agricultural Workers' Union was founded in 1946 which became the basis for the RDA in this region. Acting together, the union and the party abolished forced

labor in French West Africa—only then as far as the law was concerned.

The bastion of trade-unionism in French West Africa is Senegal, with its urban center Dakar—Rufisque. The majority of union members used to belong to the CGT; next came the powerful independent Federation of African Railwaymen, with 15,000 members. CFTC, in contrast to Madagascar, is a militant union which has engaged in struggles alongside of the other unions and has had to meet the same obstacles. FO does not count. In French West Africa as a whole, the ratio of trade-union members to the total number of wage-earners was 28.1 per cent in 1948, 30.6 per cent in 1950 and 26.4 per cent in 1952. The total number of trade-union members was 115,300 in 1953. The following shows the strength of each federation in 1948:

CGT	42,500
Aut.	17,500
CFTC	8,500
FO	1,000

*Senegal, Mauritania, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sudan, Dahomey, Niger Colony, Upper Volta.

In the French Cameroons, the relations between the strength of the various federations was as follows in 1954:

	<i>No. of Unions</i>	<i>Members- ship</i>
USAC (Auton.)	8	2,016
CFTC	36	6,489
CGT-FO	46	6,580
USCC (CGT)	147	20,000

The USCC is closely co-operating with the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC), a Stalinist-influenced nationalist party that was recently suppressed by the administration. Politically, this party could be compared to the early Progressive People's Party of British Guiana.

In Togoland under French administration 35 unions existed in 1952 with a total membership of 4,425, mostly affiliated to the CGT, with a minority following CFTC.

The trade union movement in French West Africa has recently emerged from a major battle, which it conducted with admirable tenacity and discipline. The issue at stake was the application of the Labor Code of 1947.

The Labor Code is an attempt to bring hours, wages and working conditions in the African territories into closer correspondence with conditions in France; it is the work of liberal and social-democratic legislators, and was supported by the RDA, the SP, the CP and those members of the MRP who also belong to the CFTC. Its main provision is the 40-hour week with 48 hours' pay, that is the law was supposed to bring about automatically a 20 per cent raise in the hourly wage rates without changing the weekly pay-check.

Understandably enough, the law met with determined opposition from the colonialist circles and their political friends in the Assembly; as a result, the discussion of the bill was

dragged out from 1947, when the first bill was presented, to 1952.

In 1952, the West African CGT, CFTC and the independent Railwaymen decided to open a campaign of agitation to bring pressure on the Assembly which culminated in a 24-hour general strike on November 3. FO associated itself to the strike at the last moment; it was practically 100 per cent effective in Senegal, Sudan, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Dahomey and Upper Volta. There had never been before in the history of African trade unionism a strike that had been as effective over such a large territory. On November 22, as a direct consequence of the strike, the Assembly passed the bill which became law on December 16.

The main battle, however, remained to be fought, for the employers, backed by the local administrations, took advantage of an unclear formulation in the text to pay 40 hours at the old hourly rates, thereby cutting the wages in reality. By June 1953 the four trade-union federations (CGT, CFTC, Autonomous and FO) raised three demands in a campaign to enforce the application of the law in the spirit in which it had been framed: (1) a 20 per cent raise in minimum wages; (2) a further revision of the minimum wages in proportion to an increase in the cost of living; (3) application of all provisions of the Code.

These demands were followed up by a series of strikes. The postal workers struck first on June 24 and July 6 and 7 in all of French West Africa. They were followed by the workers of Dakar who called a 48-hour strike on July 16 and 17, and the railwaymen in Niger Colony (July 27). Then: a general strike in Sudan from August 3 to August 10; a general strike in Niger Colony from August 3 to August 5; a general strike of civil serv-

ants against racial discrimination in the public services (August 10); a strike in the Cameroons from August 10 to August 11; finally, a general strike in Guinea, the most important of all, which lasted *two months*, from September 21 to November 25, and which was supported by the African peasants who fed the strikers.

On October 13, a 24-hour strike was called again in Senegal and in Mauritania, followed by a general strike on November 3, which lasted till November 5.

During these strikes, 8 leading trade-unionists were imprisoned, several strikers were wounded by the police in Senegal and in Guinea, and one striker was killed in Guinea.

However, on November 27, the French government sent instructions to all local administrations in the colonies to see that the principle of a 20 per cent wage raise and of the 40-hour week should be applied everywhere.

The strike in Guinea was no doubt the longest that had ever been conducted in Africa. The planning and organization of the strikes, the co-operation of the various federations, the prosecution of the strikes for almost five months over a huge territory, all these elements were new. Even if the strikes had not been successful, the labor movement would have emerged from them with much greater authority and prestige.

It is clear that in Africa an action of this type, on such a large scale, is not without political implications. Some of these were brought out in *Le Prolétaire*, the organ of the CGT in Dakar, which wrote:

We tell the administration calmly but firmly that, if it does not revise its position, we shall ignore it and raise demands other than economic and social. Since the African trade-unions have the

support of all social classes, they shall call a Conference at which all, unanimously, shall demand a revision of the ties that bind them to the French Union."

A French army general wrote substantially the same thing, but viewed from the other side of the fence, from the administrative point of view:

Trade-unionism (in French Africa) has reached maturity, has become conscious of its strength and has established a union which politics and religion have been unable to achieve. It is in a position to conduct an action which we can slow down only with difficulty, as there is no political or administrative system capable of counter-balancing it. Its tone and its means are well known—it talks and acts as if it represented the whole country, while in fact it is the mouth-piece of a rather weak minority—less than 2 per cent of the population—compared to the peasant mass in the countryside, which represents the real wealth of these territories but remains inert and motionless."⁶¹

The agitation for the application of the Labor Code had not spread to French Equatorial Africa, where the economy is less developed and has remained largely rural. Its only major urban center, Brazzaville, on the French side of the Stanley Pool across from Leopoldville, is the center of trade-union activity. In 1949, there were three significant unions in Brazzaville: the Building Trades, Wood and Iron Workers' Union (1,100 members) and the African Staff Association of the Ubangi-Congo Railway (250 members), both affiliated to FO; thirdly, the independent Office Workers' Union of Brazzaville. The civil servants also set up a union which is affiliated to CFTC. Since 1944, trade-unionism has also made notable progress among the peasants, who have formed Farmers' Unions affiliated to CGT and CFTC.⁵²

In Madagascar, the trade-union movement gathered strength very rap-

idly after 1944, but was smashed by the administration in the bloody repression of the 1947 "rebellion," which had been organized by police provocateurs. The nationalist party of the island, the "Mouvement Démocratique de Renovation Malgache" was suppressed, 80,000 people were killed in the extermination campaign of General de Hautecloque, who later distinguished himself in a similar manner in Tunisia. The leaders of the MDRM were imprisoned and deported to Corsica after a fake trial.*

Here is what happened to the trade-union movement in that period:

	1944	1946	1948	1950
USM (CGT) ...	6,213	11,515	1,500	44,882
CFTC	7,260	33,378	2,551	44,882

The "Union des Syndicats de Madagascar" (GT), which was connected with the MDRM, lost 50 per cent of its agricultural workers and 77 per cent of its civil-service members: dead, imprisoned, compelled, to resign from the union.

In 1944, 1,200 members out of the 6,213 of the USM were Europeans. Two thirds of the CFTC membership were agricultural workers, while 35 per cent of the USM membership were civil servants. The industrial workers only represented 7 per cent of the total trade-union membership, and these in turn represented 10 per cent of all industrial workers.

Here is the breakdown according to industrial branches for each of the two federations:⁵³

	CFTC	%	USM	%
Civil service	1,210	3.6	4,710	35.0
Peasants and agr. w.	27,971	83.0	3,214	27.0
Industrial workers	1,241	3.7	1,858	15.0
Artisans, shopkeepers, professional	2,528	8.0	1,548	12.5
Foremen	428		725	

*They were recently released and assigned to compulsory residence in Southern France. Part of this story is told in Pierre Stibbe, "Justice pour les Malgaches," Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1955.

And this is a survey of trade-union strength in French Africa as a whole:

	No. of Unions	Member- ship	% of Wage Date Workers
French West. A. ...	378	115,300	1953 26.4
French Eq. A.	81	8,000*	1953 5.2
Cameroons (F.) ...	237	35,085	1954 24.8
Togoland (F.)	35	4,425	1952 21.1
Madagascar	66	44,882	1950 14.0

*Georges Balandier (see note 52) writes that in 1949 "less than 8,000 workers" were members of trade-unions in FEA. At the time there were 62 unions in FEA, as opposed to 81 in 1953. Our figure is therefore probably below the real figure for 1953.

In Central Africa, we meet another powerful trade-union movement with a long tradition of struggle: the miners of the Rhodesia "copper belt." As we have seen earlier, the African mineworkers had engaged in strikes already in 1935 and in 1940; at that time, however, they were prohibited from organizing trade-unions and their strikes were broken by police violence. The two main mining companies (Selection Trust and Anglo-American) combined with the colonists to oppose all attempts to legally authorize African unions. In 1940 only one European union existed in Northern Rhodesia. In 1947, however, as a by-product of the "enlightened colonialist" policy of Roy Welenski, Prime Minister of the Central African Federation and former president of the European Railroadworkers' Union, African trade unions were allowed to exist legally.⁵⁴ The first union established was the African Shop Assistants' Union (2,500 members); then, in 1949, the African Mineworkers' Union, which affiliated to the WFTU. Within two years, the African General Workers' Union, the African Railway Workers' Union, the African Teachers' Union and the African Hotel and Catering Workers' Union were also registered.⁵⁵ In 1953, 8 African unions were in existence, with a total membership of 50,000. The number of European unions had

risen to 5. In December 1954, the 8 African unions united to form the Trade Union Congress of Northern Rhodesia, elected N. D. Nkoloma as Secretary-General and affiliated to the ICFTU.⁵⁶ Their total membership had risen to 75,000. In Southern Rhodesia, the African unions had already formed a Trade Union Council in 1953.

In 1952 the African Mineworkers' Union fought its first great strike, which ended in a victory for the AMU.⁵⁷ The demand of the union was for a wage increase of 2/6 a day for all African mineworkers.*

The strike lasted three weeks: from October 20 to November 10. Thirty-nine thousand African miners went on strike, 10,000 more than were members of the union. Discipline was maintained from the beginning to the end—there were no incidents, no violence. The union refrained from picketing in order not to give the slightest pretext for official provocation and repression. Nonetheless, there was no return to work. A Rhodesian paper, the *Northern News*, wrote on October 28:

... the course of the strike so far has demonstrated that the African union as a whole is amenable to discipline... and that it can conduct a *total* strike in a peaceful and ordered manner.

In spite of scabbing by the European Mineworkers' Union, which opposes African advancement into skilled and semi-skilled jobs, the strike was successful: after three weeks, the union won an arbitration award ranging from 1½-1⅘ shillings—the equivalent of an 80 per cent raise for the

lowest paid categories and of a 15 per cent raise for the highest levels. The companies had offered 3-6 pence. The significance of the strike was well stated by the *Financial Times*:

This is the first time that a major African union has managed to bring its members to the point of using industrial force. Clearly a new power has arrived in Africa whose potentialities are tremendous.⁵⁹

The membership of the AMU, which had been 28,000 before the strike, rose to 31,000 after the strike—2,000 miners joined the union at Broken Hill. The union started consolidating, raising its dues from 6d. to 2/6, abolishing the check-off system and collecting dues directly from the workers. After these measures, 19,000 workers remained with it, which is an achievement. It started publishing the *African Mineworker*, a monthly with a circulation of 4,000. In June 1954 it won annual holidays with pay and pensions for miners over 50 years of age with 20 years employment in the company—a symptom both of the growing stabilization of the labor force on the mines and of the union membership itself. Later in 1954 building trades workers of the African General Workers' Union struck for higher wages, and the Nchanga Branch of the African Mine Workers' Union came out on a solidarity strike—the second solidarity strike in Tropical Africa.*

By the end of 1954, the union was ready to resume its campaign for higher wages, this time with a demand for a 10/8 shillings increase per shift for the unskilled workers. This would have meant a 200-300 per cent raise for almost all of the African miners, i.e., a radical change in the whole wage structure of the country and a

*In 1953, after the strike, the monthly wages for African miners ranged from £4/17/3 to £19/0/1, while monthly wages for Europeans ranged from £89 to £108. (1£ is equivalent to a little less than \$3.) In other words, the 5,879 Europeans were drawing more than twice as much in wages and salaries than the 36,147 Africans. (58) There had been other strikes in Northern Rhodesia: a railway strike in 1947 and a miners' strike already in 1948.

*The first occurred in Brazzaville in 1949; see Balandier, p. 25.

frontal attack against the "cheap labor" policy of the mining companies. The companies flatly refused to discuss the union's demands.*

When the strike vote was taken, 18,110 voted for the strike, 365 against. On January 3, about 37,000 African miners were on strike in the main centers: Roan Antelope, Nkana, Mufulira and Nchanga.

As in 1952, the European Mineworkers' Union officially decided to scab; this time, however, many among its rank and file refused. The official organ of the Roan Antelope Branch went as far as to condemn the decision to scab as "an uneradicable slur on the good name of the union and its members." British unions, in particular the NUM, came through with financial support.

On January 25, the mining companies began retorting with mass-dismissals, importing entirely new workers from Tanganyika to replace the strikers. The press announced non-existent "back-to-work" movements, as the companies sent loudspeaker-trucks into the compounds urging the strikers to go back to work. The strikers again did not picket or demonstrate—again there was no incident.

On March 2, after 58 days, the strikers went all back to work together, on the following terms: in spite of the fact that they had 7,000 "surplus" miners from Tanganyika left over, the companies agreed to re-hire all

dismissed strikers, at previous rates of pay, without loss of vacation, pension or seniority benefits. The wage demand was submitted to arbitration, and the government eventually awarded the union a much smaller raise than it had asked.

As a demonstration of disciplined power, this strike represents a landmark in African trade-unionism, along with the 1952 strike and the labor code strikes in French West Africa. As the *Economist* pointed out, "the genie of African organization and solidarity will not be forced back into the bottle."

The political significance of the strike was brought out in a report in the *New York Times*:

Most leading Northern Rhodesian African political leaders—the report said—are affiliated with the African Mine Workers' Union. The union has become the spearhead of African political aspirations, which are regarded as equivalent to immediate advancement of Africans to many jobs now limited to Europeans.⁶¹

In Southern Rhodesia, the trade-union situation is comparable to the one that exists in the Union of South Africa. Very little is known as the government published few data on this subject. It is known, however, that early in 1954 a strike was called by the African mineworkers in the Wankie coalmines; troops were called out by the governments on this occasion. In June 1954, there was a European railways strike; its leader was deported to England.⁶²

In Nyasaland, at the time of this writing, the unions are preparing to federate in a Trade Union Congress of Nyasaland.

Here is the strength of trade-unionism in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1953:

*Not that the companies can't pay. In 1950, out of a total income of £55.2 million from the Northern Rhodesian mines, profits and royalties (after depreciation) totalled £31.1 million, of which £22.8 million was sent abroad to British, American and South African shareholders. Since then, profits have been even greater. For instance the Rokhana Corp. Ltd., whose total issued capital is £3,328,000, made a total profit of over £12 million in 1952, i.e., a rate of profit of over 350 per cent. There was a dividend of 225 per cent. The rest of the companies show similar results for the foreign shareholders. The increase demanded by the AMU would have cost the companies less than £7 million. (*Socialist Review*, March 1955.) In 1947, profits and dividends accounted for 43 per cent of the total value of exports from Northern Rhodesia. (Naville, see ref. 10.)

	No. of Unions	Membership	% of Wage- Workers
Northern Rhodesia	13	50,000	21.0
Nyasaland	3	910	0.9

In the Belgian Congo, the government's attitude towards African workers is very different, in two respects: on the one hand, it allows for much greater opportunities for social and economic advancement than in the neighboring territories, on the other hand it rigidly suppresses all attempts at organization to defend social or economic, not to speak of political, rights. Only recently, in 1953, and admittedly in order to forestall any attempts at self-organization, did the administration of the colony decide to set up its own "labor unions." The regulation, decreed by the Governor General, places the unions in complete dependency from the government: "the formation of a federation or union of industrial associations is subject to the authorization of the Governor-General or his deputy, and the provisional formation of an industrial association requires the permission of the Area Administrator." If the union thinks of calling a strike, "it is required that there shall be a quorum of two-thirds of the membership of the association concerned, and that action may only be taken by a three-fourths majority of the membership present." All unions must have "European advisers," who have to be of Belgian nationality and of "proved integrity." Furthermore, a representative of the Administration has the right to attend all meetings of the union or of its Executive Committee. All minutes must be transmitted to the administration and a list of members must also be submitted to the authorities.⁶³

According to the report of the Belgian government to the United Nations for 1952, there were 40 such "unions" in the Belgian Congo dur-

ing 1951, with a total membership of 5,175. Are these "unions" even worth mentioning? Their very existence no doubt reflects a pressure from the African workers, of which thousands work for the Union Minière alone under conditions even more favorable to organization than those of the Northern Rhodesian "copper belt" miners. These are social forces of a type that once deflected Father Gapon's "Union of Russian Factory Workers" far from the original purpose its police sponsors had assigned to it.

The European workers in the Belgian Congo are organized in unions that depend on either the social-democratic "Fédération Generale du Travail de Belgique" (FGTB) or the Catholic Confederation of Christian Trade-Unions (CSC). They enjoy the same rights that are guaranteed to Belgian workers in their own country. This situation is a by-product of the war, which cut the colony off from Belgium and put the European workers for the first time in a bargaining position. Before the war, any attempt to organize trade-unions was immediately met with deportation or "internment."⁶⁴

The sovereign republic and American colony of Liberia naturally does not recognize trade-unions. Nevertheless in 1951 over 20,000 workers on the Firestone plantations struck for higher wages, "under the instigation of clerks from the Gold Coast." Three hundred fifty miners working in the Boomi-Hills iron mine associated themselves to this strike.⁶⁵

In Portuguese Africa, needless to say, trade-unions are illegal. The fascist "corporation" established by the Salazarian dictatorship do not even fulfill the limited purpose that the administration's yellow unions could fulfill in the Belgian Congo: they are

very small, confined to Portuguese and assimilated Africans ("civilizados") and of no relevance to the masses of African labor.

Yet, trade-union organizations had manifested themselves in these territories whenever they had an opportunity. In 1928, two years after the present regime came to power, it decreed a labor law that was relatively liberal, and which met with angry resistance from the trading companies and from the colonists. To counter-balance this resistance, and to enforce the application of the law, groups of African workers formed organizations, which were all suppressed when it became clear that the government had no intention of applying its own law.

One of these organizations was the "Organisação Africana do Trabalho" which was founded in Mozambique, probably late in 1928 or early in 1929. Its mimeographed constitution states its aims as follows: "to protect the workers . . . against exploitation, injury, physical mistreatment, defamation and abuse," to support them and their families, to the extent of the possible, in case of unemployment; draw up collective agreements, claim cash compensation for labor, regularize labor and housing conditions. . . . It was open "to all workers of both sexes, without distinction of class or nationality." The constitution granted very extensive powers to the president; no information has been found concerning its strength, the circumstances of its formation and of its disappearance.⁶⁶ During the same period, an African nationalist organization, the "Liga Africana" existed in these territories.⁶⁷ The consolidation of the Salazar regime cut down all such movements, along with the opposition in Portugal.

Today, the resistance of the African

workers to exploitation has to seek other channels, which might prove just as dangerous to the colonial regime. Thus, in February, 1953, a decree of the governor of Sao Thomé, attempting to introduce a system of forced labor for the inhabitants of the island, led to widespread insubordination and passive resistance, which was met by police and military repression. The killing of a Portuguese officer ("decapitated when he rushed in to the jungle after heaving a few grenades," according to one account) led to massacres in which several hundred people were killed—estimates range from 200 (Basil Davidson) to over 1,000 (*Présence Africaine*). According to a rough estimate of an official on the island, about half of the population had been arrested at one time or another during the repression. The governor, however, was replaced and no further attempt at imposing forced labor on the island's population has been made.⁶⁸ Little has become known about resistance in other parts of Portuguese Africa, other than a "growing recalcitrance of labor."

In Ethiopia, trade-unions are illegal. Working conditions are regulated exclusively by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, according to the "Factories Proclamation" of 1944. Prof. D. A. Talbot, an ignorant apologist for the regime, writes with approval that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry "took the initiative to see that trade-guilds were organized, so that employers in search of workers could find them with fair facility."⁶⁹ We have here the conception of the "trade-union" as a fish-pond from which the employers may readily supply themselves with manpower, a conception that is not new, nor confined to Ethiopia, but which certainly casts a curious light on the "progressive,

forward-looking" development of the country, of which we hear so much from certain American sources. The new Ethiopian constitution of November 1955, which grants, among other things, universal suffrage, and abolished various feudal rights and privileges, does not say a word about trade-unions or labor organizations.

According to an article in the *New Statesman and Nation*, strikes broke out in Dire-Dawa, Assab and Massawa in January and February, 1954, perhaps as a consequence of a strike in French Somaliland; they were "crushed viciously, even by African standards."⁷⁰

Finally, there remains Somaliland, which is at present divided in three territories, of which two are under French and British rule, while the third is a UN Trust Territory under Italian administration.

In the latter territory, a recent report to the United Nations mentions the existence of three unions in 1953, the smallest of which is affiliated to the Italian Catholic CISL. "These organizations, however—the report says—are not militant, and no serious attempt is being made to develop them." Most trade-union members are concentrated in Mogadiscio, the only city and port of any importance in the territory. Total union membership seems to have been about 4,000 in 1953.

In French Somaliland, a Federation of Autonomous Trade-Unions (federating three unions) exists; it includes both European and non-European workers. The total trade-union membership was 630 in 1950. In British Somaliland, there were no unions up to 1952. No information has become available since. A. GIACOMETTI

36. For the history of the South African labor movement, see E. S. Sachs: *The Choice Before South Africa*, London, 1952 and: *Trades and Labor Journal of South Africa*, October 1933.

37. Sachs, op. cit.

38. *World Trade Union Movement*, August-September 1950.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Sachs, op. cit.

41. For an account of government policy and trade-union splits since 1954: *Free Labor World*, February 1956.

42. Padmore, op. cit.

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An Article Review:

The Mandarins' Lament

An Analysis of Simone De Beauvoir's Recent Novel

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR is most commonly thought of in this country as a brilliant female representative of the traditional French bohème, dutifully scandalizing the bourgeoisie with the iconoclasm of a secular existentialism.

This image of Beauvoir as a leader of the St. Germain des Prés literary Fronde is, of course, not without basis. But the overriding fact is that the bulk of her post-war writing—like that of her mentor, Sartre—deals with politics. In its latest phase her writings touching political themes have increasingly become apologetics for Sartre's own uniquely split-level Stalinist apologetics.

The superficiality of so much of the criticism of her recent writing stems from a failure to assimilate this commonplace. For historical reasons which are not at all obscure the United States is not a politically sophisticated nation. The same causes lie behind the absence of a political dimension in the analyses of most current literary critics. The personal and the psychological rule. It is a pity, for with this failure of perception many foreign novels, in particular, lose a great deal of their resonance. This is

especially true in the case of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Mandarins*.*

To find in her novel only a substantiation of the nostalgic and somewhat dated conventional American concept of the French intellectual is to miss the indicative value of the book as a reflection of the contemporary crisis. In point of fact, a person unacquainted with French post-war politics (setting aside, for the moment, his political orientation) will not only lose much of the intended emotional impact of the novel, he will certainly find big sections of it incomprehensible.

Though the non-political aspects of the novel will of necessity be the most interesting ones for American readers they are in the main actually derivative, supportive, or extraneous. In the novel, as in the times themselves, the demi-urgos is politics.

In itself *The Mandarins* represents a shift in emphasis in the point of view of Simone de Beauvoir, as even a cursory comparison with her first novel *The Blood of Others*, written during the occupation, will demonstrate. In *The Blood of Others* the fo-

*The Mandarins, by Simone de Beauvoir. The World Publishing Company, New York City, 1956.

cus is on the existential categories of responsibility, guilt, engagement, isolation, and death. While these are present in *The Mandarins* political problems have come to take on a more concrete, complex, and examined character. If *The Blood of Others* is the product of a cherished personal, existentialist assessment of life *The Mandarins* represents a turn toward a social and political evaluation of the same realities.

THE NOVEL is a detailed and bleak transcription of the life of a certain segment of the French radical literary intelligentsia in the years immediately following the liberation. Since the recasting of actual persons, organizations, and events into fictional form is of hardly more than a token order, it is possible to regard *The Mandarins* as a social document as well.

In the most general and inclusive sense the novel is a study of the varying reactions of these intellectuals to two interrelated facts: First, that France has with historic finality become a fifth-rate power, closer in a wearying number of ways to a stagnant backwater like Ireland than to the France of 150 years ago before whose Grande Armée all of established Europe trembled. Secondly, that the world fate, including that of France, is currently at the effective disposition of two power-blocs dominated by Russia and the United States.

In the novel these reactions are politically and psychologically precipitated by an attempt to establish a political force relatively independent of the two power-blocs. This organization, the SRL (formally identified in the book only by its initials) is, of course, the RDR—the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire* (Revolutionary Democratic Assembly)—

which was organized in 1948. This promising movement, supported by a very broad representation of the anti-Stalinist left and enjoying striking early successes in a period of general political apathy, nevertheless dwindled away and vanished after a brief two years of existence. It is this period which is covered by the book, though the exact chronology is not observed.

The novel opens on Christmas eve, 1944, with the entire cast assembled at a party which in celebrating the liquidation of the von Rundstedt offensive through the Ardennes likewise serves to bring to a ceremonial close the epoch of the resistance, in which all have been deeply involved.

The resistance had been a negation: *Against the Germans!* Its positive aspect lay in its potentialities for the regeneration of the French radical movement which was in a state of unprecedented prostration following the failure of the popular front, the defeat of the Spanish republican forces, the outbreak of World War II, the Hitler-Stalin pact, the defeat of the French in a six weeks' war, and the occupation. Under the conditions imposed by the (remember?) Grand Alliance the negative aspect of the resistance lay in its chauvinism and in a political program which hardly got beyond the assertion that in the future things could not return to what they were before the war. "Politics," says Dubreuilh in the novel, not a little sententiously, "should never again be left to politicians."

The bliss and the fevers of those blazing August days, when men and armor came pounding out of Normandy to liberate France, quickly subsided. "As I remember it," says one of the characters, "in August there was a lot of talk about *everything* changing. And it's just the same as ever. It's still the ones who work

the most who eat the least, and everyone goes on thinking that's just great." On the personal level, another muses about the problem of what to do "with this peace which gave us back our lives without giving us back our reasons for living."

The answer is provided by the initiative of Robert Dubreuilh, who is Jean-Paul Sartre down to his smallest mannerisms (his phobia against being photographed, for example) but without the existentialist ambiance. This is provided by Anne Dubreuilh, Robert Dubreuilh's wife, who acts as the narrator for this documentary and speaks in the first person. Anne Dubreuilh, who is Simone de Beauvoir's alter ego, is cast as a psychoanalyst, that social type which is threatening to become as much of a stock figure in modern literature as the Braggart Soldier was in the Roman comedy. By one of those inexpensive transpositions aimed at assuring us that we are dealing with art and not reportage the existentialist atmosphere of life as a prolonged living suicide is conveyed by a pervasive psychoanalytically derived despair.

"Here in France," says Dubreuilh-Sartre, "we have a clear-cut objective—to achieve a real popular front government." The aim is not really to create an independent movement: "We don't want to weaken the CP," says Dubreuilh, "but we would like the Communists to change their line. Well, here's our opportunity to bring pressure to bear." The overall task of the SRL, Anne Dubreuilh tells us, "was to maintain the hope of a revolution which would fulfill its humanitarian intentions."

A first step for Dubreuilh is to convert *L'Espoir* (*Hope*) an independent left-wing paper, into an organ of the SRL. In the novel *L'Espoir* typifies

such papers as *Combat* and *Franc-Tireur*, which emerged from the resistance and enjoyed tremendous prestige in the immediate post-war period. But to secure *L'Espoir* means to win over Henri Perron, its editor and animator. Perron, whose archetype is Albert Camus, was wrenched into the politics of the resistance and the life of action by the facts of the occupation. The occupation once ended, his only thought is to get back to creative writing. "Four years of austerity, four years of working only for others—that was a lot, that was too much. It was time now for him to think a little about himself." Perron's internal strugglings form the real axis of the book.

While he wants to retain his independence, Perron wishes "he could find a few good reasons for his stand." "I'm rebelling," he says, "because I'm afraid of being eaten up by politics, because I dread the thought of taking on new responsibilities, because I'd like some leisure, and especially because I want to stay master in my own house." He feels ignorant. "Until now it hadn't bothered him—no need for any specialized knowledge to fight in the Resistance or to found a clandestine newspaper... there was something unfair in this whole thing. He felt obligated, like everyone else, to take an active interest in politics." Financial problems close in on *L'Espoir*. He feels the danger of war. And he feels powerless. He was "nothing but an insignificant citizen of a fifth-rate power, and *L'Espoir* was a local sheet on the same level as a village weekly. . . . France can't do anything for herself. . . . What difference did it make if *L'Espoir* remained independent or not, if it had more or fewer readers, or even if it went bankrupt? 'It isn't even worth the trouble to be stubborn over it!' Henri thought suddenly." In

the end he yields to the importunities to Dubreuilh.

Hardly has he done so when the ideas of Dubreuilh begin to change. The CP tightens the screws on Dubreuilh through their press. Dubreuilh is disappointed in the concrete results of the establishment of the SRL. But basically he cannot find a justification for an independent existence because he identifies the CP with the working class. The split with Perron comes with Perron's decision to publish documents on the Russian slave labor camps. This, Dubreuilh feels, is to play the game of the reaction in France and of the United States. He moves closer to the CP. His motivation is the argument from realism: "The Soviet Union as it should be, revolution without tears—those are all pure concepts, that is to say: nothing. Obviously, compared to the concept, reality is always wrong; as soon as a concept is embodied, it becomes deformed. But the superiority of the Soviet Union over all other possible socialisms is that it exists."

Perron resigns from *L'Espoir*, becomes involved in clearing a collaborator on the basis of false testimony, and ends with an uneasy stabilization of relations with Dubreuilh, with whose daughter he has launched a loveless marriage.

Now all this is not an exact picture of the genesis and evolution of the RDR. It was, for example, not initiated by Dubreuilh-Sartre, but by persons like David Rousset, a man with a revolutionary past. (It is of some interest in defining Beauvoir's sympathies to note that while she can palliate the behavior of almost all the characters in the book she has nothing but snobbish contempt for Samazelle (Rousset's persona in the novel) who is shown as ultimately going over to de Gaulle.) Nor was the RDR

conceived of as an organization created simply to exert pressure on the CP, as a reading of its program will reveal. It was a third camp tendency. Neither did the crack-up occur over the question of the Russian slave labor camps. Several factors were at work—not the least of which was the organizational slackness of the RDR.

But the novel *does* come much closer, indeed, to representing Sartre's conception, as is evident by a re-reading of the discussion on the nature and perspectives of the RDR engaged in by Rousset, Sartre, and Gérard Rosenthal, which was published in Sartre's magazine *Les Temps Modernes* in September, 1948. This is not to deny, however, that the factual Sartre was considerably to the left of the fictional one. There is little point, however, in pressing the discrepancies between the novel and the historical fact. We are dealing here with art of a certain dry order and it has its rights. In either case the conclusions which follow would be identical.

The portrait of Dubreuilh which is laid in emerges as that of the Stalinoid type. He is, first of all, linked in many ways to the capitalist world of bourgeois democracy. It is not only a matter of his "whole discreetly privileged life," but of his attachment to the interior life of the bourgeois intellectual in all its subtlety and complexity, its freedom of inquiry and criticism, and its social disengagement.

At the same time he feels himself an outsider in capitalist society. At odds with the pecuniary and power aims of the controlling stratum, he is also alienated from the working class. Being able to generalize beyond the temporary conjuncture he is fully aware that the capitalist order, particularly the ramshackle French one, is in a state of decline.

As the most obvious heir of this dying order the CP attracts him. For it is the CP which currently has the almost total allegiance of the French working class, the only force within the country capable of overthrowing or (for Sartre) seriously modifying French capitalist society. Many of the CP's enemies are his enemies, too. Since, also, it is an anti-bourgeois power it is one upon which he can lean in his isolation. Moreover, it is a *bureaucratic* power toward which the regressive aspects of his own bourgeois personality tend to make him gravitate.

But if for nothing else its intellectual sterility repels him—not to speak of its moral reduction of the individual, its lack of democracy, and its control by a foreign power.

No wonder that Sartre is today a very divided man, supporting the CP yet not joining it, at a time when French CP intellectuals (like Marc Beigbeder, his biographer, for example) are reassessing their whole political past in the light of the 20th congress revelations and the armed struggles against Stalinism which have succeeded it. No wonder, likewise, that despite much trumpeting (including a commercial in *The Mandarins*) Sartre's long-heralded major work reconciling existentialism and Marxism has not yet appeared.

EXISTENTIALISM IS A rather deflated balloon these days, contrary to the expectations of George Lukacs, the Stalinist culture critic, whose conviction it was that it would become the universal outlook of a capitalism *in extremis*. Existentialism was in any case never a detailed, concrete, and systematic examination of society in a historical perspective. It is supra-historical, the necessary prediction being simply man in an absurd universe.

Its explanation for human action is diametrically opposed to that of Marxism. Elsewhere Simone de Beauvoir has said, "Man is the sole and sovereign master of his fate if he wishes to be it; that is what existentialism affirms; precisely therein lies its optimism." The contrast with the social determinism of Marxism is obvious. Up to the present Sartre has been willing neither to accept nor abjure this uneasy stability, whose contradictions have daily become more and more monstrous, particularly since the upheavals in the satellite countries. A limited and none too sanguine interest in seeing just how Sartre will emerge from his present dilemma is certainly in order.*

Herbert Luethy is surely right when he says that all that French CP intellectuals have got from Marx is his revolutionary journalism. His sociological and economic analyses, especially in their concrete applications, completely escape them. If the political discussions in *The Mandarins* seem so superficial, so dull—compared say, on their level, to the discussions between Naphta and Settembrini in *The Magic Mountain*—it is, we are willing to believe, not simply due to a literary deficiency on the part of Beauvoir but also to the political inadequacies of her protagonists.

For we are dealing here with a *literary* intelligentsia, not a revolutionary one. They operate on slogans

*The Hungarian events have provided us with this opportunity. Shortly after this review was written Sartre and, needless to say, Beauvoir, along with several other non-party and party intellectuals, issued a statement condemning the Russian armed intervention in Hungary.

Since we have every confidence in Sartre's unquestionable gift for transforming the obvious into the incomprehensible, we would attach only moderate importance to his recent turn except that it is symptomatic of the greatest re-examination of conscience that has taken place among French left-wing intellectuals since the time of the Hitler-Stalin pact. And since this re-examination is taking place under infinitely better circumstances than could possibly have obtained in 1939 it warrants the closest attention. —(J. M. F.)

like "the spirit of the resistance," "the unity of the left," "the war danger," "the defense of democracy," and "domination by the United States," unexamined phrases which leave them helpless before the practical politics of the CP. They are captives and idolators of the word. Action to implement their ideas, that is, the fusion of their ideas with the social power of the working class, never really arises as a problem. For them there is no organizational question, that problem which is always such a burning one to revolutionists. Workers as individuals nowhere appear in the novel except very briefly to Perron as memories of embarrassing, alienated, and contemptuous allies in the resistance. These intellectuals are therefore inevitably forced to confront their own impotence or to find support in the CP, which is based on the working class. The idea of the working class as the social prime mover in our epoch, as an independent force capable of breaking the hold of both capitalism and Stalinist reaction, really never crystallizes as a focal idea for these people.

They are nationalist, chauvinist. Germany does not even appear as a problem in *The Mandarins*, for example. Nor do they think in terms of some sort of larger integration such as a United States of Europe, not to speak of a democratic socialist Europe, the only basis upon which the economy of France can hope to begin to survive. In the end you realize that at heart they do not even have the perspective of a social revolution in their own country—simply a program of pressure on the existing government.

ANOTHER, AND ALLIED, blight of the times taints the book—academicism, particularly in its aspect of detachment, which really comes down to

cowardice and moral callousness. Beauvoir, the former lycée professor, played no role in the resistance. As she herself documents in *America Day by Day*, when she visited the United States after the war her time was almost equally divided between night club hopping, drinking, lecturing at universities, simple sight-seeing, and bewailing the times' decay with the *Partisan Review* crowd. She has no basic identification with the working class world or with working class politics. What a contrast between *The Mandarins* and the rich literature in France over the past thirty years which finds its setting in the workaday world outside the Latin Quarter!

THIS LACK OF INVOLVEMENT with her characters gives a contrived atmosphere to anything in the book which is not on the plane of ideas—sex, love, tenderness, deep feeling, human relations, the physical setting, nature. Like the writings of Françoise Sagan, *The Mandarins* sounds like a very clever fulfillment of an assignment in Advanced Composition in some university. But the whole book misses fire. Even a momentary comparison with the work of Colette reveals everything.

Under these conditions it is not surprising that there is not a whole person in the book, not one who escapes the pestilence of hopelessness, not one who is capable of love. Lambert joins the staff of *Les Beaux Jours*, a literary journal catering to former collaborators. Vincent pursues a career of killing former collaborators who have never been brought to justice. One of those he kills is Sézénac, a former member of the resistance who turns out to have been an informer. Paula, Perron's mistress is institutionalized and released effectively a zombie. The CP intellectuals are

revealed as captives—and know that they are. Anne, the *raisonneuse* of the book, decides—on the next to the last page—not to commit suicide.

Part of this atmosphere is, of course, the product of the existentialist formula and is therefore a reflection of the decay of the times as viewed by a given school and a specific individual of that school. As with Simone de Beauvoir herself, mortality and death gnaw at the well-being of the people in her books day in and night out as persistently as ever they did at the population of Europe during the Black Death. Action seems a final futility.

In the long run we are all dead, and no person who has not come to some sort of reconciliation with that fact

is ready for a total experiencing of life. On this level, one of the problems for Marxists, at least, is to differentiate between irreducible existential problems and those which are the product of epoch, class, and accident. Not the least of the victories of socialism in resolving the basic problems of physical and psychological existence will be to permit ever increasing numbers of people to confront the problems of beginnings and ends, and of transcendence, in all their infiniteness. Their responses will have a gravity and a beauty denied those evoked in *The Mandarins*, which are in the end so largely simply the lament of an articulate caste in a dying culture.

JAMES M. FENWICK

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